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PANJANDRUMS AND DECADENTS

by Esmé Wingfield-Stratford

It was on a night in the autumn of 1892, when the moon was bathing the Sussex landscape and flooding through the window into his room, that Lord Tennyson, "a figure of breathing marble", lay dying. He had spoken his last words, a solemn benediction, and before his failing eyes lay a Shakespeare which he himself had opened at the passage:

> Hang there, like fruit, my soul,
> Till the tree die.

It was the most magnificently staged death since that of Charles I, and it was the passing not only of a man but of an epoch. Now that the last of the giants who had flourished in the early years of the reign, except Watts and the mentally-dead Ruskin, had gone to his long home, the Victorian tradition in art and literature had ceased to bind. Everyone was conscious of living in a new age. Never had there been a more eager army of explorers after undiscovered countries of the soul.

Space does not avail so much as to catalogue the names of all the men and women of creative genius who were engaged in what Nietzsche would have called the breaking of the old tables. Most of these were young, and an extraordinary proportion died young. They squandered their vital energy with reckless prodigality. Some sought the stimulus of drink, others found that of the tuberculosis germ. As the Celtic saying was, "they always went forth to battle, and they always died"—or if not always, at least far too often.

Now that the times, and the spirit of the times, have changed so radically, it is difficult to realize how rich were those "Naughty Nineties" in every sort of creative promise. To contemporaries, it seemed like the beginning of a modern Renaissance, a time of higher values and more exacting standards. Why should not the arts share in the progress that was making all things new? In no other age had there been such wealth of criticism. Every individual "maker"—to use an old Scots word whose revival is sorely needed—had the opportunity of seeing his

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work in historical perspective; all the experience of the past was at his disposal, its treasures were being carefully collected and preserved, while the improvement of transport and of the arts of reproduction made them readily accessible. There was a pooling of international knowledge. The art journals were as eager as those of fashion to get the latest from Paris. The greatest foreign conductors were in eager demand for concerts. The raw crudities of the earlier Victorians were no longer tolerable in circles professedly cultured. The spectacle of Ruskin swiping Canaletto, or even of Matthew Arnold waving aside Shelley, would have raised contemptuous eyebrows among the *cognoscenti* of the Bodley Head or of the New English Art Club. That sort of thing was not said nowadays.

The modern critic was, in fact, extremely careful to make himself acquainted with what could or could not be said. To blaspheme any dead or living writer who had once been admitted to the sacred circle of the starred, in the great unwritten Baedeker's Guide to the Realms of Gold, was to become an outsider to whom gold of a more material kind would cease to come. It was the age of the Man of Letters, or critical Panjandrum. Precisely how the Little Round Button was first acquired was not always easy to determine, for the Panjandrum had seldom written any work calculated to outlast a publishing season. But once he was established, he was unassailable. He had only to go on saying the right things about the right people to the end of an honoured and assured career. He would convince his public—and nobody would doubt him—of the wit of Congreve, the humanity of Sterne, the rareness of Ben Jonson. The invention of centenaries would soon give all the Panjandrums (or possibly "Panjandra", though I hardly think the apparent asexuality of the species quite justifies the preciosity of the Latin neuter) the opportunity of discovering the same merits at the same moment in the same resurrected celebrity. Moreover, the Panjandrum was a power in the land—a budding author's reputation could be made by a favourable notice or frozen by neglect. For the Panjandrum seldom attacked; he was professionally urbane, and—to do him justice—usually good-natured. Some day his correspondence would be published and his genius for friendship—for the Panjandrum was invariably in with all the right people—revealed to the world.

To attack a Panjandrum was foolhardy; to expose him impossible. The last considerable attempt was made by Churton Collins, a critic who might himself have attained Panjandrumhood, but for his pedantic insistence out of season on exact knowledge. Among other essays in literary vivisection he submitted certain Histories of English Literature by contemporary writers to analysis, and showed them to be honeycombed with inaccuracies of the crudest description, not to speak of critical and stylistic howlers. The inconvenient fellow did himself no good and his victims no harm. One of them pointed out indignantly, by way of reply, that Collins had once been his guest. And Tennyson, who had become something of a Panjandrum himself in his old age, and had all the true Victorian's dislike of those who trouble still waters, growled out that Collins was a louse on the locks of literature. In spite of some temporary flutters, the books and their authors have continued to be standard:

"The louse it was that died."

If the critical irresponsibility of the elder Victorians had been superseded, so also had the individuality that lay at the back of it. When Ruskin or Macaulay thought a thing

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was wrong, they said so quite plainly and damned the consequences. What they said was sometimes regrettable and occasionally perverse, but you felt, when you read it, that you were getting a genuine article for your money. With the new critic you knew that if he harboured any unproportioned thought he would be too well trained to give it tongue, a change that Matthew Arnold would no doubt have hailed with delight as signifying the triumph of the academic spirit over insular provincialism.

And no doubt, within the limits thus set, an immense amount of useful work was done. Literature and art were written up and explored as never before; budding talent could select its models from all times and styles, and had all the latest theories at its disposal. Small wonder if there was confidence in the capacity of the age to produce work of a higher order of merit, or at least of a more nearly impeccable standard of taste, than any of the past! The danger was not yet realized of genius being so crushed beneath the weight of the past and confined by the tyranny of the present—even the latest—fashion, as to be incapable of spreading her wings for the empyrean.

There was another danger in the intensive study of form and style, lest art should become like a beautiful piece of mechanism without driving power. It was no longer a question of the artist or poet having something he burned to express in perfect form, but rather of his having previously perfected the form without knowing, or caring overmuch, what spirit that form was meant to embody. The elder Victorians had built their faiths upon all too shallow foundations that they had prudently taken for granted, but now that these had collapsed, there was little indeed to support faith for those who were unable to partake of Mr. Kipling's Blood and Law. It is not without significance that several of the most advanced spirits of the new movement should have sought peace by submission to the dogma and authority of Rome. Better be thought for than think in vain!

On one thing the apostles of the new culture were in agreement; they looked upon the world around them and found it the reverse of good. So far from attempting to give outward and beautiful form to the spirit of their age or to face its problems in any way, they deliberately isolated themselves in a world of their own. It was a favourite pose of theirs, and often a heartfelt conviction, that nothing in this world was worth taking seriously. This had been the theme of the last and most brilliant of all Wilde's creations before his fall, *The Importance of Being Earnest,* as it was, in fact, of all his conversation. One might not comprehend life, still less aspire to mend it, but one could always turn it to ridicule, in the spirit of a contemporary song:—

> What care I? Let the world go by,
> For it's better far to laugh than cry.

Or of John Davidson's lines:—

> Though our century totters graveward
> We may laugh a little yet.

Mr. Osbert Burdett, who has written a sympathetic study of this phase, records two typical sayings of Lionel Johnson, a young man of infinite promise tragically unfulfilled. He justified his advocacy of Home Rule for Ireland on the ground that it would be the most picturesque thing that could have happened. And when he was received into the Church of Rome, he told some one that he had taken this most momentous step in a man's life "wholly for purposes of controversy". One wonders what an earlier age, even that of the Prince Consort, would have made of this

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Johnson. A scholar who had carried off prize after prize at Winchester, whose mind was stored as richly as that of Burton or Milton, a poet, moreover, of exquisite sureness and delicacy, he would have seemed to have the world at his feet. But everything, somehow, ran to waste. He produced a few poems, perfectly chiselled, but chilled by a certain austere aloofness that never quite permits of their speaking to the heart. Add to these a slim book on Thomas Hardy and a few essays posthumously published, little gems of workmanship, but now almost forgotten, and you have the sum of his achievement. To a passion for turning night into day he added one for absinthe, and soon became an invalid. After seven hopeless years, having only just arrived at the *mezzo del cammin di nostra vita*, he fell down in Fleet Street, fractured his skull, and so died.

In breaking from the shackles of Victorianism the rising generation had rid itself of its inhibitions. Having cut loose from the old moral moorings, and having neither rudder nor chart, its frail craft were swept along the first current they encountered to eventual shipwreck. If the elder Victorians had sentimentalized about chastity, their successors did so with a more nauseating fulsomeness about such sordid things as alcoholic poisoning and promiscuous sexuality. *The Harlot's House* was a title that acted, like *Home, Sweet Home*, as an agreeable stimulus. The cult of splendid sins was as old as Baudelaire, the only objection being that sins are more likely to be sordid than splendid. To sin really splendidly—as Mr. Kipling's Devil made clear to Tomlinson—force of character is needed. And force of character is not to be acquired without the faculty of inhibition.

Lack of inhibition was the real besetting sin of the Naughty Nineties, just as concentration had been the saving virtue of those earlier Victorians who believed in the importance of being earnest. There can seldom have been a time when genius ran so tragically to waste as during the *fin de siècle*. One thinks of Ernest Dowson, writing exquisite lyrics to the proprietor's daughter of some poky restaurant, who, having her doubts about a swain who was in the habit of getting mad drunk and using horrible language, very sensibly married the waiter. One thinks of John Davidson, who started as a poet, developed into the prophet of a frightfully long-winded Satanism—the sort of thing that goes down in Bolshevik No-God societies—and finally threw himself off a cliff. One thinks of Wilde himself blaspheming the spirit that was in him by condescending to the level of a dirty schoolboy, and emerging from jail so incurable a waster that he was unable to sit down and write the play, *Ahab and Jezebel*, by which he had planned to win back his fallen laurels. And one thinks of the honest old Elizabethan proverb—"the Devil is an ass".

It was in 1894 that the new spirit attained its maximum of prestige with the appearance of a new quarterly, *The Yellow Book*. This venture was due to the enterprise of one of the most remarkable characters who have ever figured in the publishing world—John Lane. He was a man of double personality, one of the hardest drivers of a bargain that ever printed contract, but also a passionate art-lover with a flair for producing beautiful books and attracting the pink of young authors. *The Yellow Book* did not set out to be the organ of any group, but it succeeded, during the first year of its existence, in attracting so many authors and artists of the new movement that its colour will always be symbolic of the nineties at their most ninety-ish. Its original art editor and the designer of its first four covers was Aubrey Beardsley,

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who, before consumption cut short his all too brief career, established a fair claim to rank as the greatest of all English masters of the pure line. With him the cult of evil, for its own sake, culminated. He could draw like a fallen angel, or more precisely, like a Pre-Raphaelite turned decadent. He delighted to impart to the human face an expression of hard or leering or agonized sensuality such as one does not look to find this side of Styx. And yet this fascination of the artist by evil—may it not have been one of horror? In some pictures, *Lady Gold,* for instance, and *The Wagnerites*, the satire on the vices of the age is direct and merciless. There is a profound moral resemblance between the art of Beardsley and the prose of Mr. Aldous Huxley.

After *The Yellow Book* had been running for four numbers, occurred, in the spring of 1895, the scandal of the Oscar Wilde trial. Wilde, as it happened, had never had anything to do with *The Yellow Book*, but the effect on the so-called "decadent" tendency that it was supposed to embody was to bring it, and its promoters, under dire suspicion. It was known that the fear of further proceedings had caused quite a little exodus to France of well-known people. England was caught by a not unprecedented rampancy of virtue. Those who chuckled in bars over the latest story about "old Oscar" were determined that they would have no more tampering with morals in the name of the muses. The new broom was applied even to the chaste floor of the Bodley Head. Among the contributors to *The Yellow Book* was Mr. William Watson (now Sir William), an accomplished poet of the old Victorian tradition, who could turn out verses that at their best might have been mistaken for Tennyson's. This gentleman felt that the time had come for him to do his bit on the side of the angels. One of the angels was good Mrs. Humphrey Ward. With her moral support, Mr. Watson put down his foot. Beardsley, who, as usual, had designed the cover—a design in which the most ingenious modern critic would be puzzled to spot the offensive element—must go. Otherwise Mr. Watson's poem would be withdrawn, a *Hymn to the Sea*, concluding, as a hymn ought to do, with an uplifting line,

> Man and his greatness survive, lost in the greatness of God.

Here was a problem for the editor, Henry Harland, to whom the ultimatum was addressed, not to speak of poor Lane. Not that Lane loved art less, but that he loved Lane more, for as he once candidly remarked to the present author, "I am a man of business and not a man of sentiment". Moreover, he had been infuriated by the discovery that one of his office boys had been mixed up with the Wilde affair. *The Yellow Book* must be above suspicion, the cover must be scrapped, the art editor go. It would never do at such a juncture to lose the moral prestige conferred by Mr. Watson's hymn.

From this time forth *The Yellow Book* ceased to be of any special significance. It went on existing for another couple of years, and the support of such unexceptionable contributors as Gosse, Garnett, A. C. Benson, Walter Raleigh, and Mr. Watson himself, was a sufficient guarantee to readers that their minds would henceforth be improved without the danger of being corrupted. Meanwhile Beardsley, now fast approaching his end, transferred his genius to a new periodical, *The Savoy,* designed to be a sort of left wing organ of the advanced movement. For this he produced that wonderful prose extravaganza—never destined to be more than a fragment—*Under the Hill.* This he illustrated with drawings in his last style, of such

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manifold opulence that it would seem as if he were trying to crowd into these final creations all the infinity of loveliness that was soon to be taken from his eyes for ever. There is hardly any suggestion of a Satanic bias—the artist had no time now for such irrelevances. And then Beardsley died and *The Savoy*, almost entirely supported by the talent of the poet and critic, Mr. Arthur Symons, did not long survive him. There was no market now for a decadent periodical, and several died still-born.

If we are to adopt that rather irritating phrase, the Naughty Nineties, we shall have to qualify it by explaining that the nineties ceased to be naughty, in the sense intended, shortly after the turn of the decade. Decadence lingered on for some time—there was one wonderful imitation of Aubrey Beardsley called *Count Fanny's Nuptials*, of which one phrase, much quoted by undergraduates, sticks in the memory about the nightingale singing the swan song of her virginity—though my own memory does not serve to recall whether or not the "She" was Fanny him- or her-self. But decadence, after the Oscar Wilde affair, was never a dominant influence.

Perhaps the greatest literary product of this particular phase of aestheticism was one of which the world had no knowledge till its author was safely in the grave and his memory had been boycotted long enough to satisfy the honour of Mrs. Grundy. For Oscar Wilde had not been idle even within the narrow compass of his cell at Reading. At long last, he had been allowed the strained mercy of pencil and paper. And he had availed himself of it to strike the last and most magnificent of all his poses. He saw himself purged by suffering, rising transfigured, crowned with thorns—a saintly, almost a Christ-like figure. Nature, the "wearisome, uncomfortable Nature", for which Wilde had not so long ago declared that we should care the less the more we studied Art—Nature would find him clefts in the rocks where he might hide, secret valleys where he might weep. Poor Nature was never to have the chance. Her most attractive caves and valleys were destined to offer fewer attractions to the released prisoner than a villa at Naples or even the meanest of Parisian lodgings. *De Profundis* was, in fact, the supreme attempt to make perfection of form fill the void of faith and substance. That the writing was not a sincere reflection of the writer's mood it would be too much to assert. Sincere or not, it takes its place among the classics of literature. Not till some years after its appearance was it realized that the revulsion of feeling it occasioned was due even less to the published matter than to the faithful or prudent editor who detached it from the enormous epistle of which it was a part, much of it an egotistic and effeminate rigmarole of alleged personal grievances.

But though the decadent group had lost such semblance of unity as it had ever possessed, the artistic quickening of the *fin de siècle* went on. It was a time of boundless experimentation. New movements were everywhere being started, new paths opened up. What *The Yellow Book* was in literature, the New English Art Club, founded in 1886, was in painting, except that it was not destined either to haul down the flag to the Philistines or to peter out. It provided a basis of association for all artists who would not conform to the hidebound standards of the Royal Academy. Whistler had taught English art to look overseas for its inspiration. The methods of the French impressionists were eagerly studied, and copied with perhaps too little attempt to adapt them to the requirements of the national genius. Mr.

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Sickert was in the van of this movement, and also Mr. Wilson Steer, before he adopted a style more redolent of the fields of Constable than the studios of the Quartier Latin. Mr. Clausen showed how the latest devices of colouration could be used to glorify the sweetest of old-world countrysides.

In sculpture excellent work was being accomplished. Gilbert had showed, by his Eros fountain in Piccadilly Circus, that plastic grace could thrive unrebuked even in London, and the tomb he designed for the Duke of Clarence, at Windsor, ranks high in the annals of monumental art. In Wells Cathedral it is not too much to say of Brock's recumbent effigy of Lord Arthur Hervey that it is no unworthy newcomer to a glorious company.

Even in music, the long silence, or worse, that had reigned in the land of Byrd and Purcell, was at last beginning to be broken. Very wisely, England was going to school again, and reviving an intelligent appreciation of music by attracting the master conductors and executants of the Continent to her shores. She was producing composers of her own, if not yet in the very first rank, at least the precursors of revival. The thoroughly national genius of Sullivan was reinforced by that of Edward German, whose incidental music to *Henry VIII* was first performed at the Lyceum in 1892. In a more serious vein, there were Stanford and Parry. And in 1900 an event occurred of epoch-making importance. Elgar's *Dream of Gerontius* gave proof, to all who had ears to hear, that great music was no longer the monopoly of Continental composers.

In literature there was the same tale to tell of restless activity, of new ways explored, of ancient idols dethroned. It was perhaps significant of what was to come in another sphere than that of art, that England should have turned with such eager admiration to "that sweet enemy, France". As the methods of the French impressionists had been copied by the painters, so were those of the French realists, particularly Zola, by the writers, though English virtue could not be content without jailing a publisher who was indiscreet enough to bring out a translation, not sufficiently mutilated, of that master's *La Terre*. Mr. George Moore, a thorough Parisian, showed, in his *Esther Waters*, how the record of commonplace lives could be both scientifically exact and artistically satisfying. The realistic method is much to the fore in the early *Yellow Book*, and the names of Ella d'Arcy, George Egerton, and Hubert Crackenthorpe come to one's mind in this connection.

There is the opposite method of deliberately extravagant fantasy, of which *Under the Hill* is an example, and of which Mr. Max Beerbohm made himself a master in two arts. Nor must we forget the Celtic Revival associated, in the English mind, with the name of Mr. W. B. Yeats, whose genius had somewhat closer affinities with modern British than ancient Irish literature. He provided a healthy corrective for the French influence by substituting for its clear-cut Latinity the misty outlines of the Irish landscape. But to record all the shades and nuances of literary aspiration in this most prolific of decades would require a volume of no common bulk to itself.

The image that rises most readily in the mind's eye is that of children, running after the rainbow. There is a bag of gold, they know, where it touches ground. One or other of them will sooner or later secure the prize and yet . . .

And one thinks of those old Victorian giants, enthroned complacently on their hoards, and wonders how they ever came by such wealth.

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HERMANN BROCH

by Edwin Muir

HERMANN BROCH's name is only beginning to be known in Austria and Germany; it is hardly known at all in England and America. And that is easy to explain, for he has written only one book thus far. But that book is a masterpiece; it is, moreover, quite new in conception and method; and it resolves many of the problems with which the more advanced novelists, during these last two decades of experimentalism, have been struggling.

Literary criticism in the strict sense requires a collaboration between the reader and the critic; both must be acquainted with the subject of discussion; it must be present in both their minds before anything can be done. Consequently, in this essay I shall be unable to prove any of my points, to show, as I could easily do if the subject were present, that Herr Broch's trilogy is a work of great beauty, and that its author is an exquisite artist, a psychologist of astonishing depth and originality, and a thinker of sweeping range. These qualities, which finally give his book its value and make it worthy of discussion, must be taken on trust meanwhile, until the recently issued English translation has found its readers.* So this essay will have to be mostly informative and descriptive, must confine itself to some account of the method and structure of the trilogy and the central body of ideas on which that structure rests.

The Sleepwalkers (*Die Schlafwandler*) is a trilogy, the separate volumes of which have appeared consecutively and at intervals in Germany. The first is entitled *Pasenow, or Romanticism* and the action is laid in 1888; the second is *Esch, or Anarchy,* 1903; the third, *Huguenau, or Realism*, 1918. The action in each of the volumes is quite short, approximately a year. Nor does the book resemble in other ways the ordinary trilogy, which is generally concerned with the history of successive generations of the same family, as for instance *The Forsyte Saga.* In *Pasenow* the action takes place partly on a large estate on the Polish border of Prussia and partly in Berlin, and it consists largely of the perplexities of Joachim von Pasenow, a romantic young officer of aristocratic family who sees the old traditions, the old security of life losing their reality, and cannot come to terms with the new ways which insist on forcing themselves on his notice and determining his way of looking at the world. The second volume, on the other hand, gives a picture of lower-middle-class, working-class, and Bohemian life in the Cologne and Mannheim of 1903, with a glimpse of the socialist and trade union movement which was becoming powerful then. Only two of the characters in *Pasenow* come into this volume, and they have already assumed a rather legendary aspect. Edouard von Bertrand, a former friend of Joachim's, who deserted his class to go into business and is now a very rich man, and Ruzena, Joachim's mistress, who has fall-

* THE SLEEPWALKERS *by Hermann Broch, translated by Willa and Edwin Muir* (LITTLE, BROWN. $3.00)

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en on evil days (she appears only for a few minutes). Esch, the hero of this volume, is an incarnation both of the confusion of the age and of its frantic and muddle-headed desire to put things right and achieve a new order. The old security to which Joachim von Pasenow clung so desperately is no longer effectively in existence; Esch does not know where he stands; even the most respectable and solidly established things turn out, when he looks at them, to be unstable or unjust or corrupt: confusion everywhere. With the third volume we are in 1918, the last year of the War. The scene is the little Rhineland town of Kur-Trier. Now appears the man who in Herr Broch's eyes is the typical representative of the age: Huguenau, the realistic business man, without prejudices, without morality, without culture, and without any traditions save those of his specialized occupation. The old security has almost completely vanished; even Esch's struggles to find some trace of a just and reasonable order in the world have lost their reality, have deteriorated into a despairing battle with shadows; and nothing much remains but the naked and almost meaningless actuality, in dealing with which Huguenau, the man without prejudices, is alone perfectly at home. In this volume where all the implications immanent in the first two volumes are resolved Joachim von Pasenow and August Esch again appear; the heroes of the three volumes are thrown together in the petty daily life of a small provincial town. But no satisfactory solution of their relation to one another is possible, and it is violently ended in the few days of the German Revolution, when Esch is killed and Joachim von Pasenow's car is wrecked by the mob and he himself loses his wits. Huguenau remains triumphant.

This is a bald account of the structure of the trilogy. But in spite of the skill that is obvious in that structure, for instance the changing of the social setting from the first to the second and from the second to the third volumes, giving one the feeling of witnessing the development not merely of a family but of a civilization, and at the point in each case where that development can be most clearly seen in operation, what I have said thus far of the structure of the book tells one very little about it, for that structure merely repeats the lines of a more essential structure, a structure of imaginative thought to which all the action has a strict relation and which itself amounts to a philosophy of history. To make clear the relation of this philosophical structure to the action of which the trilogy consists I shall draw upon the best known illustration I can find. The formal structure of *The Divine Comedy* is clear, logical, and satisfying in itself. But we know that implicit in it is the structure of mediaeval theological thought, and that without the existence, the support, of the edifice of mediaeval thought it could not have been what it is. In his book on Dante, Mr. T. S. Eliot has made admirably clear that to enjoy *The Divine Comedy* as a poem it is not essential that we should accept its body of ideas, though it is necessary that we should understand them. The same is true of Herr Broch's trilogy. It can be enjoyed, it is true, but not enjoyed rightly, if one ignores altogether the philosophical conception informing it and giving it shape; but its full significance can be seized only if one understands that conception, which is not an afterthought or a moral tacked on to the story, but is immanent in the action and determines the development.

As there is no other modern novel of which, so far as I know, this is true, it will be advisable at this point to make a distinction before going on to outline Herr Broch's

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underlying conception. His trilogy, for example, is not a propagandist work; he does not use fiction as a means for making certain views prevail against certain other views, as Mr. Shaw does in his plays and Mr. Wells does in his novels. Nor are his ideas introduced in the form of philosophical dialogues on matters in general, such as the dialogues which Mr. Aldous Huxley writes with so much intelligence and skill. The vice of such dialogues in a novel is that they are rarely necessarily in character; the thoughts put in the various interlocutors' mouths could be exchanged without making any essential difference. There are no dialogues of that kind in *The Sleepwalkers*; the characters do not talk to amuse, or enlighten, or persuade us; they talk about their own concerns and in a style that fits their natures. Herr Broch's thought is implicit not in what they say, but in the destinies he gives them and the world in which he sets them; it is silent for the most part, until in the last volume he gives it explicit and formed expression in a philosophical essay consisting of nine chapters which appear at intervals throughout the volume. When these chapters come at last they have the effect of a crystallization towards which all the preceding action has been working; they are the legitimate expression of the logical content of the work, a content which has throughout been immanent and could only in this way and at this point be given a clear intellectual formulation.

The chapters in which the ideas are developed are given the heading of *Disintegration of Values*. Leaving out all the proofs and qualifications, Herr Broch's thesis is this: that ever since the dissolution of the mediaeval synthesis a disintegration of values has been going on which today has almost worked itself out. This process could not have been avoided and cannot be stopped until it has reached its conclusion; and it was rendered necessary by the bankruptcy of the mediaeval logic itself, by the fact that mediaeval theological thought, a closed deductive system, could not resolve its own antinomies, and so had to allow the reason to start anew from the fact of the empirically given world, or rather from the multitude of facts presented by that world. The world of mediaeval thought rested on the Christian God; all knowledge, all value, all experience, were given their place in the mediaeval hierarchy solely by reference to God as the ultimate Reality; and all thought ended in Him. But when the mediaeval synthesis was dissolved the Christian God was no longer left enthroned as the finite-infinite, heavenly-earthly bourne of all human aspiration and thought: man's goal was now projected into the infinite, and there no longer remained any ultimate symbol in which all human values converged and were bound together, any meaning that was more binding than the meaning of each value individually. But as these values could no longer find a final common point at which to come to rest, they had to run on parallel to each other, driven on by their own immanent logic, until each became autonomous, each resolved to break its own record, as the author expresses it. So military technique becomes a thing in itself, business a thing in itself, art a thing in itself, getting rich a process in itself, even revolution an end in itself: each governed by its own laws, each regardless of its neighbouring values, and each reaching its *reductio ad absurdum* in a state where only a business man can understand business and only a painter can tell what a picture is about. This process is what Herr Broch means by the "disintegration of values", and the state I have just described is, according to his analysis, the state of the modern world. The

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logic which drives on those parallel and autonomous value systems is characterized by a complete ruthlessness, by what the author calls "an almost metaphysical lack of consideration for consequences"; and the end towards which it makes is a world in which the old bonds which united men are destroyed, and human understanding is almost impossible, so fatally are men entangled in separate values that ignore each other and cannot comprehend each other. It is a state in which the isolation of the individual grows more and more intense and the value of human life progressively contracts until all that it covers effectively is an occupation or a *métier*.

But though *The Sleepwalkers* ends with the consummation of this process, though the author pursues his analysis of the disintegration of our time to its conclusion, his book is not an incitement to despair, but far rather a confession of faith. As he sees it the process is a painful but necessary historical liquidation; but when it is consummated the Platonic idea is fated to return; the unity of humanity must be restored because the very laws of the reason, the needs of the human soul, make it inevitable.

This is a very bald summary of an historical and philosophical essay filled with the most subtle and exact thought. My purpose, however, is merely to give a sufficient outline of it to make comprehensible the main conception from which the trilogy derives its structure; for the whole book follows, or rather imaginatively incarnates, this conception of the disintegration of values. It does this so thoroughly that each of the three volumes, recording different moments in the process, has a separate form of its own. The ostensible plot of *Pasenow* is straightforward, and consists simply of the solution in action of various perplexities in the hero's mind, these being symbolized by his relations to his friend Bertrand, which he never understands, and his feelings towards his mistress Ruzena and his future wife Elisabeth, which he also never understands. But the dying tradition to which he clings has still sufficient strength to step in and round off the plot with neatness: for he marries Elisabeth. This volume is a miracle of delicate suggestion, of suggestion so subtle and fine that it produces an impression of magic. In *Esch* human relations are by no means simple; in his struggle to establish order the hero involves himself in all sorts of confusion and absurdity, and although in the process he does achieve something—not what he desires, but still something—he becomes a comic figure, a figure surrounded by a rarefied humour not unlike that of Franz Kafka. In this book it would be difficult to say what the plot is, for cause and effect work in a peculiar idiosyncratic way, as if in the general dislocation of things reason itself had got a twist. The method is still suggestion, but it is used to open up sudden abysses beneath the action and to show us states of mind never before, I think, explored by any other novelist, states of mind in which the seeds of the future seem to be growing in darkness. The action may be called deliberately arbitrary; it is irrational, but irrational in a particular methodical way, with an irrationality which resembles that of a child who wishes to bring order into the world, but all of whose attempts are defeated by a quite naïve and predetermined ignorance. In *Huguenau* there is hardly any action at all; the lives of the characters run in the main parallel to one another, converging only now and then, unfruitfully or disastrously; and a catastrophic event from outside, the outbreak of the Revolution, is needed to unite for a moment their destinies.

In all these three volumes there is felt by the characters a dim perception of two things:

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that the world is becoming a more and more homeless place, more and more insensible to their desires, their deepest needs, and that a way of salvation must be found; a consciousness of the dehumanization of the world and of the need for redemption: there are the two motives which run through the lives of the characters in *The Sleepwalkers*, the two motives which recur again and again in countless variations throughout the trilogy. One of these motives is finally rounded off, as we have seen, in the essay on *Disintegration of Values* in the third book. The other is given its final expression in the same volume in a curious section, also in chapters scattered at intervals through the text, entitled *Story of a Salvation Army Girl in Berlin*. It is a separate story, with no attempt at realism of presentation, cutting across the parallel strands of the narrative. It is altogether outside the story in a world of its own; it is indeed on the very frontier of the book, where one imagines the author wished it to be. Part of it is written in a sonnet sequence, part in prose. In these poems the aspiration for salvation felt by the characters is raised to a different plane, where it serves as a counter theme to the theme of disintegration. It will be seen that the pattern is extremely complicated; but it is an ordered and deliberate complication, the complication of a musical composition which works out in harmony.

From this account one may gain some impression of the extraordinary formal elaboration and harmonious balance of this astonishing work. I can give no idea of the profundity and exactitude of the author's psychology, for I should have to cite examples, extract scenes or whole characters, and the book is so closely knit that such a thing is almost impossible. Herr Broch's psychology may be called deductive as against the inductive psychology, for instance, of Proust. Proust began with certain sensations or feelings and followed them as far as they would take him; and in the end by this means we know that he achieved a metaphysic of his own, as the last volume of his colossal work shows. Herr Broch starts from an extremely comprehensive, profound, and exact knowledge of the human heart and mind, from certain universal emotions and thoughts which all human beings must feel and think, rather than from what one particular character will feel or think. But, as they are felt and thought by the various figures in this trilogy, these emotions and thoughts take on the most subtle individual modifications, and are pursued, on the opposite route from that of Proust, to their most secret and almost invisible manifestations. Herr Broch is certainly a very great psychologist, and at his best the effect he produces on one's mind is that of pure illumination. He lays bare desires so secret that only by the road he has pursued could he have reached them, desires more secret than could ever have been discovered by a writer like Proust who started from the given concrete data of sensation, and the limits of whose exploration were determined by that fact. It is as if Herr Broch were taking us within the mind itself and from there were showing us horizons of which we have only dreamed before.

This, I think, is the essential thing to be said about his trilogy. As for the subtle harmonies of his style, I can convey no idea of them, nor of the consummate skill with which he presents a scene or suggests an atmosphere, nor of the exquisite finish which he has given to all the separate parts of a balanced and majestic whole. But I have tried at least to show that he has made a new contribution to the modern imagination and incidently to the modern novel, widening the scope of both.

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ARE PUBLISHERS FEEBLE-MINDED?

by Thames Williamson

THE scene of this hyar story o' mine is laid in Africy," an Ozarker said to me the other day. He was an amateur author, an ignorant untravelled native of the Arkansas hills, and he proposed to tell the world about life and love in the Dark Continent.

I am not so ambitious as that. The scene of my story is laid, not in Africa, but in my own back yard. My profession is writing books. I have been dealing with book publishers for fifteen years. During the past ten years I have published a dozen and a half books, not counting foreign editions. These books have appeared under perhaps nine or ten different imprints. So long as I confine my remarks to book publishers as they dot my own experience I am certainly justified in drawing a distinction between myself and the Ozark hill-billy who told me all about Indians and cannibals up the Nile.

My first books appeared under an absolutely clear sky. I had been teaching, and by way of utilizing my spare energy I wrote a textbook. It landed with an educational publisher, one of the best in the field. I signed my first contract, handed me by an editor whom I did not then appreciate. At that time I considered him cold, unimaginative, dry, bloodless, almost inhuman. Now that I have known a good many other editors I value that first man for singular clearness of mind, great terseness, and an absolute reliability. I was a Far Westerner and he was a New Englander, but though personally we never got beyond cut-and-dried civilities we went at our mutual business with a bang. Within six months he gave me four contracts, two for books already accepted, two for another pair of manuscripts.

It was a case of beginner's luck. I wrote five or six textbooks and began to yearn to write novels. And write novels I did. My first one was called *Run Sheep Run*, and when I placed it with the first publisher that saw it I was quite certain that I was in for as happy an experience as I had had with my textbooks. *Run Sheep Run* appeared, beautifully bound. The story did not sell, but the critics liked it, and I went confidently ahead. After *Run Sheep Run* I did a story called *Gypsy Down the Lane*. My publishers accepted it, and produced it, even though my style had suddenly gone poetical. We went on. I did a third novel, which I shan't bother to name here. Out came this third opus, and still no objections from the publisher. Yet by this time I had swooned into poetical prose with an apparently deathless clutch, and in addition there were at least half a dozen good reasons why this third novel was bad. The New York *Times* reviewed this story under the caption, *A Good Man Weakens.*

I blame the publisher for all this. At that time I was in my late twenties, and I knew practically nothing about fiction. Save for the usual burning desire to create, et cetera, et cetera, I was a complete novice. But the publisher—he ought to have known better. On the basis of his age, experience, and gen-

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eral book knowledge he should have seen what I was getting into. At first sight of that second novel of mine he should have taken me aside, prescribed a good dose of salts, and advised a period of retirement until I was over my trouble. My symptoms were as simple and obvious as the symptoms of measles in children. Nevertheless my publisher showed no more intelligence than a crane or an automatic elevator; he merely took my manuscripts, printed them, offered them to the public. He did this with most of the material that came to him—and within two years had failed and was in prison.

Meantime I was working out of my measles. I turned to a different type of publisher: young, brisk, smart, all that sort of thing. The editor was a boy who impressed me as handsome but mentally indolent, or, as we say in the Ozarks, *resty*. They say he was a squash tennis champion, but what interested me more was that after he had published *Stride of Man* for me he expressed himself as very dubious about my new manuscript, called *Hunky*. My agent and I managed to persuade him to accept the story, whereupon the boy editor prepared to let the book die a natural death. Only a series of happy accidents saved Hunky for the rather numerous American and European editions into which he was finally to appear. On her own initiative—so I am told—a girl in the publisher's office sent the story to the Book-of-the-Month Club. There it lay around unnoticed—so I am told again—until the wife of a member of The Club's jury, trying to pass the time while waiting for her husband, picked it up, read it, liked it, and called it to the attention of the committee. Result: a Book-of-the-Month Club selection.

Hunky made money for us, but I promptly left the people who had published it. They had muffed the sale of the book through an admittedly mistaken sales policy; the resty editor continued to look upon me with doubt; I could not hope that the series of happy accidents to *Hunky* would duplicate itself in the case of subsequent books with this publisher, so I quit, leaving the squash champion suddenly loud and bitter in his denunciation of ungrateful authors.

Out of the frying pan into the fire. I had a broker or agent who was a very clever and intelligent girl. I talked to her at length, in the effort to make her understand just what my peculiar publishing needs were. She smoked and listened, smoked and listened, and sold my next novel, *The Earth Told Me,* to a new crowd. I knew nothing of these people save that they were "smart" and bright, and pushed their books for more than they were generally worth; I begged them not to accept my book if they were not my kind of publisher. They assured me that they were just the firm for me, and we signed a contract.

Trouble smothered this book before it was even in galleys. The publishers, along with several other New York concerns, decided to try to sell "first-rate fiction" for a dollar a copy, instead of the usual two dollars or two dollars and a half. I was asked if I would let *The Earth Told Me* appear as a dollar book, with a paper cover. My immediate reaction was that the whole scheme was silly. In a book the average American wants substance, good looks, and an impressive length; a paper-bound book strikes him as too transitory, too pale and weak, too stingily measured to be bought and esteemed. No one but a half-Europeanized publisher who understands Paris better than he understands Chicago could ever imagine the American public taking to paper-bound books, yet after I had expressed the opinion that the stunt would fail I agreed to let my novel be one of the

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dollar books. There was nothing else to do. If I had refused, then my book would have been neglected, for obviously the publishers were going to mass all of their effort, financial and otherwise, behind the dollar-book scheme. They went ahead, and although *The Earth Told Me* was clearly superior to *Hunky*, and should have had a heavy sale because of the preceding success that *Hunky* had enjoyed, it failed miserably. My book lost out because of the lack of intelligence in an American publisher who did not understand one of the most fundamental and vital of all American traits.

When I lose money I make up for it by spending more. *The Earth Told Me* failed, so my wife and I went abroad for a year. In Rome I sit chewing my nails, wondering where and how to place my new novel, called *In Krusack's House*. At this point something happens to make me almost believe in Providence. I receive a letter from the head of a first-rate publishing house in New York, telling me he would like to have me on his list, and relating what he thinks of *The Earth Told Me*. "To make Eskimos as real as people in Boston", runs the letter, "is a notable achievement." I grin at my wife. I have lived around Boston for parts of fifteen years, and the people there have never struck me as real. Not so real and not so interesting as Eskimos, I tell my wife, but I let that go. The letter pleases me. Immediately I sit down and type out an answer. I express my opinion of publishers in general, tell him what I need, and beg him to make sure that we are meant for each other.

Everything brightens, gets rosier and rosier. The answer to my letter says I have IT, and I retaliate by sending in my manuscript. Later I follow it. In New York I find a friendly gang at the publishing house, a flattering amount of attention, and the most generous contract I have ever had, the depression notwithstanding. The jacket for my new book strikes me as commonplace, but I overlook that. What is one more indifferent jacket to an author who has already seen his name on half a dozen others! I go back to my hotel sure that I am all set, and for life.

Yet that feeling of sureness is beginning to evaporate. I am still with this particular publisher, at least I understand that I am. But how long is it going to last? From an author's standpoint publishers are in one sense like women: they are all perfect until you sign on the dotted line, and then in the light of successive cold grey mornings you begin to see signs of imperfections, small molehills that can grow into mountains. The newest ideal exhibits traits that you knew in previous loves, and while you shudder and stare and gulp and try to think you're wrong it appears that Nellie is not so different from Margaret and Joan after all. In spite of yourself you get to generalizing, publishers this, and publishers that.

Take letters, for instance. Half the publishing people that I write to write back as if they were nitwits. I ask specific questions about proofs, type, et cetera, et cetera. Yet as often as not some of my queries are not answered at all. Many times the answers are partial, or vague, or plainly ambiguous, or otherwise unsatisfactory, so that I must write again, like a bill collector. If my letter to a publisher contains more than one point it is likely that at least one of them will be obscured in the answer; or perhaps totally different matters will be referred to *en masse*, crushed together like dishes of vegetables at the bottom of an old-fashioned ice box. Thus I have learned something: whenever I have more than one detailed thing to say to my correspondents I enumerate each point, often putting it by itself in a separate paragraph. I

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may say, for example, (a) Are you interested in such and such a story? (b) Are you already committed to such a story? (c) If not, will you give me an option on such a story? (d) Will you write me with regard to the above-mentioned points? It all sounds stupid, and a bit like insult, but my experience shows that this is the only method whereby I can get any satisfaction from the publishing people with whom I correspond.

Or take the matter of forwarding mail. I travel most of the time, and since I have no actual home my mail comes to me through my various publishers. Much of it is forwarded by a thoughtful and very careful secretary who does not often make slips, but a good deal of it reaches me—insofar as it actually does so—through less responsible avenues. In spite of the fact that I move half a dozen times a year, perhaps, there are publisher's clerks who send my mail to what they last year assumed was my permanent address. These people act like certain types of the feeble-minded, continuing at whatever they are set at until someone goes to the trouble to change their mechanical movements. I once wrote a publisher that I was leaving Mexico, and to hold all my mail. A month later I stood in that publisher's office, bowed in response to a clerk's "How do you do, Mr. Williamson?" and almost immediately afterward heard that same clerk say to an assistant, "Forward this letter to Mr. Williamson; he's in Mexico City; you'll find his address in the file". Of course it is a chore for the publisher, and a great favour to the author to have his mail forwarded, but it seems to me that the essential point is this: if a publisher undertakes this service, why doesn't he see that his organization discharges it with at least a show of intelligence?

Periodically I get a letter from the editor of a house which published a textbook for me. In this periodic letter the editor always refers to the mutually painful fact that my book does not seem to sell well, and what, in my opinion, is the reason? I always reply that I am sure that the book sells poorly because it is marred throughout by a series of miserable illustrations; I also say, plainly, that all of these illustrations should be taken out, and the book re-set, with new and better pictures. I mail the letter, and back comes a rejoinder, asking me to make a list of the particular illustrations that ought to be deleted. I reply that as I said in my previous letter I believe that all of them ought to be removed. The editor then falls silent for a number of months, perhaps as much as a year and a half, and then I get a letter, stating that my book does not seem to sell well, and what, in my opinion, is the reason? I reply as before, he answers as before, I write back as before, and the incident is once more closed, for a time! Nothing else is ever done about it, and apparently the filed letters on the subject are lost or forgotten.

Here is another example of the logical faculty in publishers. I once went to see an intelligent and experienced editor for the express purpose of asking him a question of importance to my professional future. It was this. I wanted to be free to write the kind of novels I liked, and since this required an income from another source I had thought of writing a series of juveniles under a pseudonym. The publisher in question was already making juveniles under my true name, but, said I, did he see any objection to taking on a new line under another name? No, he said, he did not. Good. I went to work, sent him a new book, and finally heard from him to the effect that the story was a good one, but that to publish it under a pseudonym whilst the same concern was publishing other juveniles under my true name,

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might tend to confusion, therefore they must refuse it. Thus all of my preliminary thought and care went for nothing, my friend having tripped over the very obstacle that he had assured me did not exist. You may say that he did not want what he considered an inferior book, but this was not it. This editor would not say a book was a good one unless he thought so; moreover, I immediately sold the story to another house, and it was published with success.

Two years ago I selected the title of my Mexican novel, appearing this autumn. The title is *Sad Indian*. I have never ceased to think this an effective title. Also I have asked dozens of people, people as variegated as banana pedlars and poets, and almost universally they thought *Sad Indian* a corking title. I finished the novel, sent it to my publisher, got back a telegram to the effect that it was the best thing I had ever done, and presently received a letter in which he stated that the title was very poor. Everybody in his office, he said, agreed that it was bad. A much better title was *Indian Blood*. At once I objected. I pointed out that the story concerned an Indian, that if anyone read the story thoughtfully they would see that he was sad, that *Sad Indian* was a definitely Mexican concept, that everybody I knew liked it, et cetera. As for *Indian Blood*, I said that it suggested a breed novel, that it was cheap, ordinary, trite, trashy enough to be found in any pulp magazine, and would certainly ruin my very very fine tale! The title went through as *Sad Indian*, and yet I get small comfort out of the victory. For the whole argument illustrated how stubbornly a publisher can cling to nonsense, and if this really very fine house did such a thing once it can surely do it again.

I resemble many other authors in that I object to the way my books are advertized, but the basis of my objection is perhaps unique. Advertizing costs a great deal of money, and a publisher has more than one author to push. I realize this, and accordingly I have never in my life asked that more money be spent in advertizing a book of mine. The fact is that I have sometimes suggested spending less, for the reason that I know an overdone book will cause the publisher to look upon my future offerings with suspicion. No, what I object to is lack of intelligence in advertizing. The people who write publishers' copy are personally very nice, and all that, but in nine cases out of ten what they produce is inferior stuff. I have newspaper friends who tell me that scarcely ever does a bit of book publicity come to their desks that is in usable form. The stuff is not put together to fit the end for which it is frankly intended. More important, it shows poor judgement. The people who write publishers' copy leave out essential things and harp on trivial matters, they produce blurbs that all sound alike, they knock out piffle that is dead instead of alive, they arrange their ideas poorly, they waste space with vague and repetitious statements, they make actual errors of fact, in short, they fumble the ball, and the prospective buyer yawns and drifts on.

Book publishers remind me of monkeys. Superficially they are bright and quick, but they are much more interested in getting hold of new things (authors) than they are in making a proper use of them. Amateurs are often thrilled by the fact that this or that publisher wants to examine his stuff, and has voluntarily suggested reading it. Nothing in that to get excited about. A monkey seizes everything new, tries his teeth on it, and casts it down; and a publisher does much the same sort of thing. The English publisher of *Hunky* illustrates this trait. He heard good

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things of my book, he cabled his New York brother about it, got an enthusiastic answer, and took the book. Then his mind wandered to other things; he brought it out casually, much as you add a new and unexpected passenger to the crowd in the family car. The book failed in England, but when I visited the publisher in London he made no apology for having, as he frankly said, brought it out at the wrong time. The book had merely caught his fancy, and he had snatched it monkey-fashion, after which he neglected it.

Why, however, should a publisher neglect a book on which he is risking money and spending time? Several reasons. Often he is so pressed for time that it is inevitable that he neglect some one member of that season's shifting children. More annoyingly, he does it because he does not understand the book. After all, a publisher is primarily a business man. Many types of books lie about his desk; he may understand most of them, but the unconventional, the different, the individual sort of thing often baffles him. He understands the individual words which constitute it, but the mass effects of imagination and emotion which are created by those arranged words, these more important things he stumbles over. As a consequence he many times accepts a book without knowing quite what it is all about. Then what happens? If the thing falls naturally into the money-making class he pushes it, and everything is pie. If it is the type of book that requires nurture he tends to neglect it; if it fails to respond to advertizing he is almost certain to drop it, and perhaps the author along with it. No slow-growing oaks are wanted.

Book publishers are certainly feeble-minded, using the term in a loose figurative way. A publisher ought to look upon a particular author as an entity, a continuous personality, a bundle of character, a source of some one distinct and individual type of creative power. Also, he ought to make an effort to understand him, instead of which it often happens that the publisher merely plays around with his authors, collecting mild anecdotes to relate later on, and gazing at their surface as if they were without depth.

And yet how is he going to do anything else? The people who take manuscripts and turn them into books are a part of the same flurried existence which has its clutch upon us all, and many of their shortcomings arise from this fact. How *can* a publisher get beyond the mere exterior of one of his authors? Circumstances reduce any given author—from the point of view of the publisher—to a single paragraph or page in a seasonal catalogue, and all of the publisher's views, reactions, and plans must be arranged in terms of that seasonal catalogue. Somewhere far off there is an author, mulling around with a new idea, brooding over it, working it over and over. Finally he gets it into shape, and sends it to his publisher. Look what happens then. The publisher takes this manuscript; in a few hours he runs through what the author has taken a good many months to create. The thing is put aside. Some day the publisher is called upon to think of it again, because it is to be published. Along with a succession of cigarettes, a dribble of out-of-town callers, telephone calls, messenger boys, stray thoughts about the wife, arguments with printers, street noises, letters to Vienna and Kalamazoo, in amongst these and a million other distractions the publisher gives a brief time to the interpretation of a book that he knows as slightly as he knows his next-door neighbour at a seaside resort. Under such circumstances it is almost sheer accident if he happens to dispose of the book in a manner that may really be called intelligent.

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EDWIN ARLINGTON ROBINSON

by Nancy Evans

IT SEEMED to me that Edwin Arlington Robinson fitted his poetry well—large of build, broad-browed, deep-eyed, and just sufficiently age-bitten to be timeless. His words were slow, considered and always those he meant to use. What I wasn't prepared for was his simplicity; there is nothing, I discovered, more disarming than a poet's common words. I had gone to talk with a poet whom I felt to be, like Keats, "with the English poets", and I found that I was talking with a man. He wanted to answer my questions but, his diffident voice asked, "What can I say? People want to know what has happened to me, and there is nothing to tell. You see, my poetry is my life".

A great deal has been written about Mr. Robinson's aloofness, about his unwillingness to talk about himself. The result has been to make him seem the embodiment of Walter Pater's "clear, gem-like flame"—a man apart among men, untouched by familiar weakness, and untroubled by familiar pleasures. Such a life is difficult to comprehend, and above all difficult to reconcile with poetry which seems written out of agony. A course too easily followed, too serenely composed, does not seem the proper accompaniment to Mr. Robinson's understanding of men. What about Keats's remark that "A poet's life is an allegory"?

And yet the facts of Mr. Robinson's life seem to chart an open course. Since he left Harvard University nearly forty years ago, he has been a poet. In 1909, long before his work was well known, and while he was still a poor man, he gave up his job in the New York Customs House to devote himself wholly to poetry: "I knew", he told me, "that I should get along somehow". Such words are so quiet that they almost obscure the fearlessness of his nature. *The Children of the Night,* published in 1897, includes *Dear Friends* which says:—

> The shame I win for singing is all mine,
> The gold I miss for dreaming is all yours.

The man who wrote those lines knew quite well what he was doing, and he was, I think, more than half prepared to be called a failure by the world. But his life was his own and his goal was clear before him; nourished by Wordsworth (not particularly by Browning, as is usually supposed) and familiar with Shakespeare, he was declaring his allegiance to the great company of English poets when he wrote:—

> What does it mean, this barren age of ours?
> Here are the men, the women, and the flowers,
> The seasons, and the sunset, as before.
> What does it mean? Shall there not one arise
> To wrench one banner from the western skies,
> And mark it with his name forevermore?

Like Wordsworth's poet, he rejoiced more than other men in the spirit of life that was in him. And he had a great love for men—a love so vital that even now he spends half of every year in New York so that he may be in the midst of crowded streets. His friendships, some of which began when he was at Harvard discovering the freedom he needed,

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were warm and powerful. With such a nature is it any wonder he was impatient with the "little sonnet-men" who were writing neat verses after the manner of Austin Dobson? Or that he wanted to be out of the pale twilight of Emerson, Longfellow, and Holmes?

"I tried many experiments—ballads, quatrains, *villanelles*. I tried many forms, but I was not really interested in them except as exercises," Mr. Robinson said when we were talking of his early poems. And even though he wrote a *villanelle* he used his own sources to produce *The House on the Hill*!

After leaving Harvard the young poet went to New York where he lived in furnished rooms on Twenty-third Street. He worked as a subway time-keeper—"dignified by the name of Inspector", he said; "I carried a lantern in the dark."

Alone and steadfast he was doing that task of which Rembrandt speaks in *Rembrandt to Rembrandt*:—

> One of the few that are so fortunate
> As to be told their task and to be given
> A skill to do it with a tool too keen
> For timid safety, bow your elected head
> Under the stars tonight, and whip your devils
> Each to his nest in hell.

There is always a sort of understatement, a muting, in Edwin Arlington Robinson's remarks about himself. When I, remembering Rembrandt, asked him whether he had always felt safe, secure, in his knowledge that he would write his poetry, he said, "Yes, I think so, but I knew from the beginning that I was in for it. I did enough to bring down trouble on my head, but I have been treated well—I have had much less difficulty than I *might* have had". A little later, after some reference to the past, he said carefully, "I had my experience early, but it went *deep*".

I was impressed by this quietness in success; at sixty-three Mr. Robinson goes on writing just as if his reputation were not already made. He is glad people read his poetry, as he is no doubt glad to have been awarded the Pulitzer Prize three times over, but he is unconfused by recognition. He is content to allow the future to estimate his work, and one feels that to him the satisfying thing is that he has written the poetry, that he has followed his light. There are twenty-two volumes in all—with *Nicodemus*, the new collection which has just been published—and he need only say

> "You made your picture as your demon willed it;
> That's about all of that. . . ."

II

Even with his early poems Edwin Arlington Robinson was "interested in using an idiom unfamiliar as poetry". He said that it took him twenty years to accustom people to his method. This poetic idiom was to preserve the rhythms of ordinary speech within the traditional forms; it finally resulted in the flowing blank verse that is peculiarly his own. There was a forecast of maturity in *Captain Craig* and great understanding in *Ben Jonson Entertains a Man from Stratford*, but not until he wrote *Merlin* in 1916 did Mr. Robinson reach his full power; he believes that his best poetry is "somewhere" in the Arthurian poems because, he explained, "The romantic framework enabled me to use my idiom more freely".

Unlike so many twentieth-century poets he maintains that "there is room for sufficient variation within the conventional forms of poetry". "Poetry must be music", he said, "not that it must jingle, but it *must be music*. And that is the defect of free verse. Maybe it's possible to write musical free verse, but I've never read any. And it's not memorable

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either. I cannot recall a single poem written in free verse, can you?" Only second to his demand that poetry be music, Mr. Robinson believes that "poetry must *bite*". It is in making the traditional poetic forms serve his own ends that Mr. Robinson offers a clear proof of his greatness—here once again one discovers that to the man of genius there is no freedom so useful as restraint. "There is no such thing as the sonnet," he said, "there are only individual sonnets."

The people in Mr. Robinson's poems are so real that even Amy Lowell supposed that the men from Tilbury were portraits. Surely Richard Cory and John Evereldown were living men! At least the poet must have known their models in his native Gardiner, in the State of Maine? But he assured me that only one of all his characters was done from life; that one was Captain Craig, who was suggested by an elderly Jew. The others came to him much as did Flammonde, who appeared one night when Mr. Robinson was sitting in a movie-theatre: "Suddenly", he told me, "I saw Flammonde and I could hear the poem quite clearly. All the lines were there and I only had to write them down".

This gift for creating men led naturally to the dramatic dialogues, which have caused Mr. Robinson's name to be linked with Browning's, and to the narrative poems which are also dramas. When we talked about *Tristram*, he said, "I like to be familiar with my characters and their development before I start a poem. *Tristam* took two entire summers to write and I worked out its structure somewhat as a playwright would work out a play". This did not surprise me, but I was uncertain what he would say when I asked him whether the Arthurian poems were allegories, whether they were intended to parallel the great War. He said that they tell of "the breaking-up of the old order", and when I mentioned the objections of certain of his critics to this interpretation (Ben Ray Redman said "The people in *Lancelot* are more alive than symbols have a right to be"), he answered, "It is all there—it is all quite clear".

I asked him about his two plays, *Van Zorn* and *The Porcupine*, which were written about 1915, being curious to hear what he would tell me. He agreed that his friendship with William Vaughan Moody might have had something to do with his writing them and then he explained, "But I'm not a playwright. A play must be *direct*—there is no chance for a movement of light and shade".

It seems to me that no truer description can be made of Edwin Arlington Robinson's blank verse than that phrase, a movement of light and shade. It perfectly expresses the delicacy of effect, the subtle play, which makes his poetry so lovely. And it explains the flexibility which can portray the inward workings of men even to the shadows of thought.

Though he has been called the poet of the submerged self, he says that the psychological observation in his poetry is accidental. Nor is he interested in the exploration of pathological extremes; it is true that Fernando Nash, *The Man Who Died Twice*, may seem a sort of case-history, but it is a poetic case-history and the method is always the poet's method. In talking about his men Mr. Robinson said, "Well, for that matter, I suppose anyone who leaves the middle of the road is abnormal in one way or another".

He finds it "more interesting to write about failure than success", and so most of his poems are about people who fail in one way or another. Sometimes, like Timberlake in *Matthias at the Door*, they are rich in the gold that is "not negotiable", sometimes they fail as Merlin did when he left Camelot for Vivian, sometimes they are afraid, and again,

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as with Matthias, they are not yet born—

. . . There's a nativity
That waits for some of us who are not born.
Before you build a tower that will remain
Where it is built and will not crumble down
To another poor ruin of self, you must be born.

There are many reasons for defeat in these lives, but always they discover, as did Lancelot, that

The Vision shattered, a man's love of living
Becomes at last a trap and a sad habit,
More like an ailing dotard's love of liquor
That ails him, than a man's right love of woman
Or his God.

This Vision is not only the cosmic vision; it is the personal vision, the inner truth of his own nature which is the persuasion by which a man lives. This gone, through mistake or accident, and like Hamlet he will say, "I have lost all my mirth". "Hamlet", Mr. Robinson commented to me, "was a failure."

Which is fate and which is folly? Or are they the same? These are the questions that perplex Mr. Robinson's people. But whatever else is uncertain, the wisest know, as Timberlake told Natalie, that

There is no cure for self;
There's only an occasional revelation,
Arriving not infrequently too late.

There is a choice, yes, but the choice is circumscribed, and man is, more surely than he likes to admit, the storehouse of his own destiny. "I think man's pattern is there before him," Mr. Robinson said. And then he added, "but it's difficult to discuss these ideas, we're getting metaphysical and our terminology may mean such different things".

Though Edwin Arlington Robinson's conception of self is the poet's vision, it does present much the same conclusion taught us by psychology, and this, I think, helps us to read his poetry with an understanding ear. We, too, have learned that our fate is in the tissue of our bodies and we know that we can create our own havoc. This knowledge is inspiring or disillusioning according to the results achieved; the World War made us feel fated to disaster, disaster which grew out of our own nature as men, and we dropped into the "bleak and arid despair" which Joseph Wood Krutch analyzed in *The Modern Temper*. Edwin Arlington Robinson experienced the War, and he experienced it with the deeper sensitivity of the poet, but his vision of man was the poet's vision, and he is still able to say "I think man is more than he seems".

The idea of fate lying within man is present in all great tragedy—in Shakespeare when he wrote *Hamlet*, for example. Aristotle said in the *Poetics* that tragedy is brought about "not by vice or depravity, but by some error of judgement". We know that though the devil tempted Marlowe's Dr. Faustus, he would not have fallen but for his vanity and his lust for power.

The psychology of sex is an explanation of one part of that self about which Mr. Robinson writes, and it has furnished the generation since the War with a sort of gospel of fate. Eugene O'Neill depended on this fate-consciousness when he wrote *Mourning Becomes Electra* in answer to his own question of whether it was possible "to get a modern psychological approximation of fate" into a play for a modern audience.

Unlike O'Neill, Edwin Arlington Robinson has not tried to achieve his tragic effects by revealing the workings of sexual pathology. Instead, he has written about the conflicts of people trying to live with their ideals and their mistakes. No words are more often on our lips than success and failure, and no modern writer—poet, dramatist, or novelist—has examined their meaning more closely.

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III

Mr. Robinson has not lacked interpreters, but he has not commented on their interpretations. He has been silent, as if to say, "If I must be more than poet, call me anything you like". "Traditional", "moral", "ironic", "romantic", "psychological", "mystical", "agnostic" are all to be found in the books and articles written about him; none of them will quite do. They are not enough, they are too much—they are true and they are entirely false. The fact is that Mr. Robinson is himself; he belongs to no group nor even to any time. He is as much of an anomaly now as he was when he published his first book, *The Torrent and the Night Before*, with the dedication "To any man, woman, or critic who will cut the edges. I have done the top".

Quite contrary to the disciples of the modern temper, he believes in that "celebration of human greatness" which Mr. Krutch thinks is so illogical. It is this belief, I think, that has disturbed Mr. Robinson's critics more than any other ingredient of his poetry. If he understands defeat as well as he seems to when he tells of Garth and Natalie and Nightingale, how is it that he believes in the importance of man? It is true that his heroes, men like Timberlake and Lancelot, triumph and despair in a way unknown to King Lear, but they are able, none the less, to surpass themselves. It was Timberlake who spoke of how he had lost happiness in being himself:—

". . . It seemed a waste
Of more than should be lost, until I thought
Of nature's way and of how small we are
In our performances, and how infinite
In our futilities and ignorances."

There is dignity in such words, and it is a dignity that is not far from triumph.

In his chapter on *The Tragic Fallacy*, Mr. Krutch said, "We have come, willy-nilly, to see the soul of man as commonplace and its emotions as mean", and in pointing how far we are from the spirit which produced great tragedies, he says, "Every real tragedy, however tremendous it may be, is an affirmation of faith in life". Timberlake and Lancelot are not mean, whatever else they may be, and one may surely say that they reassert the capacities of man.

Here I must emphasize that Edwin Arlington Robinson does not think of himself as a prophet; he would never, I think, say with Æ that "Poems are oracles out of the psyche". "Ideas", Mr. Robinson remarked to me, "are, of course, inseparable from the medium, but much memorable poetry is not important for what is said." And when we were talking of Walt Whitman, he said, "Somehow I feel that Whitman seems greater than he is. Anyway, I feel that whatever power he had was as a poet—not as a thinker". One hardly expects such remarks from a poet who, according to critics like Percy Hutchinson, is partly the moralist.

But returning to Mr. Robinson's beliefs—if he is not a materialist, isn't it because, as Lloyd Morris points out in his book, *Edwin Arlington Robinson,* he is more the son of the nineteenth century than the twentieth? Isn't he, perhaps, a Puritan turned Transcendentalist? What could be more natural than that a young poet at Harvard when Josiah Royce was enjoying the full popularity of his theories about "the romantic importance of intuition and its expression" should become one of his disciples? This is reasonable enough, to be sure, but unfortunately for so tidy an explanation the young Robinson did not know Josiah Royce. He told me that he thinks he was uninfluenced by any of the faculty; far from being absorbed in the metaphysics of idealism, he

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was revelling in the company of those young men who were his friends. "No," he said, "I'm afraid Mr. Morris was on the wrong track." Having said that, he smiled and added, "But if you want to find out about my 'Transcendentalism' [the quotes were in his voice] read *The Man Against the Sky* and *Matthias at the Door*—it's in those poems". So did he recognize the aptness of Mr. Morris's conclusion while disagreeing with the argument.

"Faith", Mr. Krutch tells us, "is a vital phenomenon, something not achieved by taking thought, but born, on the contrary, out of an instinctive confidence in life." Now this is just the faith Edwin Arlington Robinson possesses; it is the confidence that makes his world coherent. And it is not destroyed though he sees man bedeviled by self-doubt, laziness, introspection, fear, and accident—all the devils that live near the tree of knowledge. He does not possess the modern temper and he is, I think, more than a little suspicious of its validity; does not Timberlake say

. . . "Hold fast, Matthias.
There's not a man who breathes and believes nothing.
So you are done with mysteries. If you are,
You are the one elected and fulfilled
Initiate and emeritus of us all."

Mr. Robinson's critics have variously evaded this faith of his, though they have not hesitated to call him great. Each seems to have found a different way of reconciling himself to the fact that this poet is the voice of our understanding of ourselves. Perhaps they are a little afraid to admit that he says in his poetry, as he told me quite shamelessly, that "It is impossible to believe that it is all for nothing—such waste would be inconceivable". Again it was Timberlake who said:

". . . We only pay, and die.
To a short-sighted and earth-hindered vision
It would seem rather a waste, but not to mine."

One encounters phrases such as "Robinson's resigned if sorrowful agnosticism" which Babette Deutsch used in reviewing *Cavender's House*; one reads that Emerson's epigram "Man is a golden impossibility" is a statement of Robinson's meaning; one follows Lloyd Morris's explanation in terms of influences; one reads Eda Lou Walton's remark, "In Robinson's lines the reality of the subject—the scene and the character—is fused with the poet's vision", but one finds very little attempt to compare the poet's world with ours. Even Mark Van Doren and Ben Ray Redman seem to be inclined to present his ideas in a way that will make them congenial to the modern temper.

In his book, *Edwin Arlington Robinson*, Ben Ray Redman, who seems to love Mr. Robinson's poetry, turned to a remark made by the poet just after the publication of his first book. The remark was made in answer to a review of *The Torrent and the Night Before* which appeared in THE BOOKMAN during 1897; after praising "the swing and the singing of wind and wave and the passion of human emotion in his lines" the reviewer said, "His humour is of a grim sort, and the world is not beautiful to him, but a prison-house". Mr. Robinson replied, "The world is not a 'prison-house', but a kind of spiritual kindergarten where bewildered infants are trying to spell God with the wrong blocks". This is a striking remark and it is one in which Mr. Redman sees "compacted the tragedy, the humour, the pity, and the doubt that are the vitalizing elements of Robinson's utterance". When I asked Mr. Robinson about it, he said, with a sort of fond disapproval, "I was young then and it was a smart thing to say".

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Mark Van Doren emphasizes that the world is beautiful to Edwin Arlington Robinson, and he contents himself with referring to the young poet's remark as "these significant words". But he finds his chief critical bulwark in the consistency of "his presentation of the problem which existence is". "A little light in a great deal of darkness, a wisp of music in a universe of irregular drums", these are the images, Mr. Van Doren tells us, that Mr. Robinson uses for portraying "man's never quite wholly vain struggle for self-respect". And yet the poet's voice does not seem so mild, so unchallenging when one reads in *The Man Against the Sky*:—

Shall we, because Eternity records
Too vast an answer for the time-born words
We spell, whereof so many are dead that once
In our capricious lexicons
Were so alive and final, hear no more
The Word itself, the living word
That none alive has ever heard
Or ever spelt,
And few have ever felt
Without the fears and old surrenderings
And terrors that began
When Death let fall a feather from his wings
And humbled the first man?

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CHRONICLE AND COMMENT

Poor Dreiser

We should never have believed that there could be a book on Theodore Dreiser written in worse English than the Master's own. But that startling feat has been accomplished by Dorothy Dudley in *Forgotten Frontiers*, subtitled *Dreiser and the Land of the Free* (Smith and Haas. $4.00). It is a temptation to say that Dreiser has only received his due; but fairness demands the admission that he deserved a better fate in the first lengthy volume devoted by another to his career and work. After all, with all his incompetence as a writer and with all his muddy, childish ideas, he did succeed in putting a number of veracious records of his time into books. Miss Dudley lacks the veraciousness, shares his ideas—plus a few more even too silly for him—and outdoes him in language. Hers is not the pathetic or laughable blundering of one born lacking a sense for words, but a pretentiousness almost beyond endurance. A slight idea can be gained from her Preface, consisting of these two paragraphs:

"The more specific the detail the more accurate the immensity it projects.

"In relation to the shifting parts of an undiscovered whole the one part constantly betrays meaning."

And here are a few of our favourite sentences from the book:

"His books, made in the face of tameness, are touched with wilderness."

"Without doctrine, he is mineral and vegetable as well as human, and so has moved ensconced in the changes."

"He is an American high-water mark, capable of waves that fall beyond."

"In him our disorderly order gleams with its mysteries."

"He is, I think, a man of unrivalled appetite for display, which is expression."

"What else in truth heightens style but a concise intimacy between speaker and speech?"

"If genius is caring for human beings more than others know how to care, then Dreiser has genius. Or if it is true that the great Don Juans are also the religious men, then Dreiser is proved to be a voluptuary."

"*The Hand of the Potter* is a deep perforation from life."

"He refused the religions . . . on the ground that they betray human nature, that is sexual nature and the wholeness of living."

"Beginning with Mencken, American letters began to be noticed by men and to be feared by women's clubs and neuters."

An interesting sidelight is thrown on the Dreiserian philosophy and the mentality of his biographer by this charming colloquy concerning Dreiser's mother:

" 'Was she really so alive, so "pagan", as you call her? Was your father enough for her then, or did she find others?'

" 'She did if she wanted to, I'm certain of that. She had a way of doing what she wanted to do without disturbing the rest of us. But I was too young. I don't know about that.'

" 'Well, maybe she did. Maybe your father was not your father. How do you know?'

" 'I don't know, but there is an access of gloom, a brooding in me over long periods, so like him that I feel a close relationship.'

"His answers to these questions, ready to explore regions that to most people are closed precincts, testify again to a detached intellect, that un-American gift."

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V. SACKVILLE-WEST

who turns from the Edwardian period to a study of England today in her new novel, "Family History", which is reviewed in this issue.

Note the Greenwich Village idea of "pagan", the obsession with sexual irregularity, the coarseness under the guise of truthfulness and camaraderie—not only these, but every one of the half-baked notions that passed as the new gospel of freedom in the early 1920's are to be found in Miss Dudley's treatise, and indeed constitute its reason for being. The Puritan and the professors still have to be slain, the Anglo-genteel tradition is still keeping America from its native heritage, Carl Sandburg, Edgar Lee Masters, and Emmanuel Carnevali are still great poets, artists must be saved from the crippling tortures of domesticity ("Dreiser broke the American tradition that the artist should live like any other citizen with, for, and of the family and the home"), America is a nation of boorish Babbitts and sex-starved wives, and so on and so on, through the whole dreary repertoire. The book has a quaint Van Winkle-ish atmosphere, as though the author had fed her youthful soul on *The Little Review* and *The Seven Arts*, had been carried along on a wave of frenzied delight as the "new men" swept in after the war, had been thrilled almost beyond endurance by having a piece accepted by the *Smart Set* along about 1921, and then had been knocked quite unconscious by the rapture of reading *Civilization in the United States: An Inquiry by Thirty Americans*—to wake up the other day and proceed to talk as usual, unaware that that futile, feverish world was dead, and nearly forgotten.

The truth, of course, is that nobody of any capacity at this late date is going to write the story of the last thirty years in this country

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E. V. LUCAS

whose volume of reminiscences, "Reading, Writing and Remembering", contains a feast for booklovers.

with uncritical acceptance of the self-evaluation of the fake Renaissance of 1910-1925—even the Communists are beyond that. So that the only recourse, since Miss Dudley has done just that, is to see how much useful material can be salvaged from her labours. Unfortunately the amount is not large. Dreiser himself has written autobiographically of large sections of his life, and while he is lengthy and painful, it would be far better to go to him than to Miss Dudley's incoherent and pretentious abridgement. She does provide, however, some thirty or forty pages of original material, which help to fill out the Dreiser saga. With commendable industry she has been at pains to communicate with the people still living who were associated with Dreiser at important times of his life, and to get their statements. She is usually partial to her hero, but she realizes that not all the numerous quarrels and ruptured friendships in Dreiser's life can be charged to persecution. In at least one case, that of the late Ben Hampton, she had the wisdom to see that Dreiser's treatment of him in *De Maupassant, Jr.* was a cruel injustice; Hampton, one of the truest and kindest of men, was to the end of his days bewildered and hurt by Dreiser's version of his relations with Harris Merton Lyon, to whom he rendered the extremes of human service. Miss Dudley's researches clear up some of the charges of plagiarism against Dreiser, but she is unable to account for the Dorothy Thompson episode.

Miss Dudley has also gone painstakingly through Dreiser's files, and asked him numerous questions. The liveliest pages in her book contain excerpts from letters of H. L. Mencken—Dreiser being the most frequent recipient of that endless stream of amusing, hearty, helpful letters which Mencken poured out to scores of individuals during all those years in which he was working with might and main to effect the tawdry "Renaissance" that will always be associated with his name. But Mencken's letters are not quite quotable—even aside from the one that sounds as though it had some libel-suits or suicides in it, unless all the parties concerned are dead. Let us conclude with a sample of Dreiser's literary criticism, expressed in a conversation with Miss Dudley. William Dean Howells, whom Miss Dudley dismisses as "academician and parson", is the subject:

"Yes, I know his books are pewky and damnfool enough, but he did one fine piece of work, *Their Wedding Journey,* not a sentimental passage in it, quarrels from beginning to end, just the way it would be, don't you know, really beautiful and true."

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Chesterton, Baring, Belloc

It is not often that three of The Bookman's favourite authors can be found hobnobbing together at their ease, and it is a still rarer occasion when they are presented by such a host as E. V. Lucas, whose *Reading, Writing and Remembering* (Harpers. $4.00) is just published. This is a large and fascinating book, the latest of a list which takes up a full page of fine print on its flyleaf, and its memories of people and books, from the days when Mr. Lucas first listened to the verses of Jane and Ann Taylor read aloud in the parlour to his entrance into the society of the elect around the "Mahogany Tree" of *Punch*, have all the freshness and vivacity which we have learned to associate with his name. Apprenticed to a bookseller at sixteen, he ran a steadily mounting career to his present position at the head of the house of Methuen. If anybody knows about authors, he ought to. Nevertheless, in introducing the first of our trio, Maurice Baring, from whose *Lost Lectures* we quoted in the September Chronicle and Comment, he displays an engaging modesty:

Nor has he the air of an author; there are traces of his early training in diplomacy still upon him, although I suspect him of being throughout life diplomatic for others rather than himself; his conversation is not normally of books, and if it is typical of authors during dinner to balance wineglasses on their heads, I have met very few of the genuine kind. If no one else has called Maurice Baring the divine amateur, I will. Every kind of writing comes naturally to him and he stamps them all with his own distinction.

The preliminary details of my first meeting with Maurice have vanished from an ordinarily good memory. I know it was at lunch at the Café Royal and I know that Hilaire Belloc and G. K. Chesterton were also there, but I have no notion which of us was the host. There is, however, a special reason for remembering as much as I do. Belloc is a great singer, and one of his own songs pleading for mercy for sins of which he is not too much ashamed, with a refrain "Let poor Hilary in", should be on every gramophone; and my special reason for remembering this meal is that he sang all through it. Maurice and he, when at Oxford together, had written a number of poems, satirical or Rabelaisian, and these Belloc sang. . . . All things, however, come to an end—or so I then thought—and so we parted; but there was more to follow, for when late in the same afternoon, I went to the Turkish Baths in Jermyn Street, I was awakened from a peaceful sleep by the notes of a deep Gallic

A pencil sketch of E. V. Lucas by the late Sir William Orpen, made in a few minutes on the back of a place-card for a dinner at the Garrick Club a few years ago. The card is reproduced through the courtesy of Eugene Saxton, editor-in-chief of Harper and Brothers (and once editor of the "Bookman"), who with Rollin Kirby was a guest of Mr. Lucas at the dinner.

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voice; and there again were Belloc and Maurice, recollecting more Macaronics, but this time naked.

"Do you remember an inn, Miranda?
Do you remember an inn?"

I never see Belloc's name without thinking of these haunting lines.

Then comes a glimpse of Baring in a particularly ingenious aspect.

Maurice Baring, who knows all languages dead and living, has also invented one of his own. It is very simple, consisting of adding "umble" to the initial consonant or consonants of the word and removing the word's own letters. He even uses the Personal Column of the *Times* to communicate with his friends in this code, and once asked me a long and very expensive question there, about a rare book, which I failed to decipher. Money thrown away. For example, wishing to say that Ronny Knox was staying in Scotland with Laura Lovat, he would write "Rumble Knumble stumble wumble Lumble Lumble". This may look like the larger lunacy, but there are those to whom every message thus conveyed is crystal clear. Ronny Knox is one. It was he who, when everyone else had given it up, decoded "Mumble mumble mumble" as "Manners makyth man".

Mr. Lucas's book, as the reader may have gathered from the foregoing, contains quotations by the yard and material for conversation enough to last for weeks. We shall permit ourselves to offer only one more sample, which concerns a meeting between the Prince of Wales (afterward King Edward VII) and Sidney Lee, then editor of the *Dic-*

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Bernard Shaw talking with J. B. Priestley in the English village of Malvern a few weeks ago, during the third of the Shaw festivals held at Malvern each summer.

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tionary of National Biography but not yet the author of the standard life of Shakespeare.

"And what is your special subject, Mr. Lee?" the Prince inquired. Lee, who told me the story, said it was Shakespeare. The Prince was delighted. "Stick to it, Mr. Lee," he said, "stick to it. There's money in it."

The Goethe-Slayer

WHEN we were reading the manuscript of Douglas Bush's musings on the gap between scholar and journalistic critic in America, printed elsewhere in this issue, we lingered over the paragraph concerning that "Lord High Executioner among reviewers", Mr. Clifton Fadiman. Mr. Fadiman, it will be remembered, is the man who last June polished off Goethe in three pages of the New York *Nation*, finding him "non-relevant to our revolutionary era", forgotten by the younger generation in all lands, and "in all probability the greatest source of non-usable 'wisdom' the Western world has produced in the last few centuries". A friend of ours, who represents at least a respectable portion of the younger generation, took offence at these hard words, and sent us a two-page letter of protest. One paragraph, which concerns Mr. Fadiman's remark that Goethe not only is non-relevant to our own era but was indeed non-relevant to his own, may be quoted:

As for Mr. Fadiman's claim of Goethe's detachment and lack of concern for the exterior events of his time, what of it? Has it not occurred to Mr. Fadiman that it is perhaps precisely this detachment which one prizes in great artists? The author chides Goethe for his lack of concern with the French Revolution, and makes clear how badly the man of Weimar fares in comparison with Karl Marx. To the former, I answer only with the countless examples of how unfortunate were artistic souls in history who indulged themselves in political expression—

ZELDA FITZGERALD

wife of Scott Fitzgerald, and now an author in her own right. Her novel, "Save Me the Waltz", is reviewed in this issue.

Beethoven, for instance, with the *Eroica*—and, above all, with the reminder that Leonardo da Vinci in all his works offers no clue to the vastly important discovery of America, Dürer none to the Reformation, Rembrandt none to the Thirty Years' War, and Delacroix none to the July Revolution. To my mind, the chief function of a great artist is rather to make history himself than to set it down or comment upon it for politicians and statesmen.

Mr. Fadiman is now beginning a series of articles on American novelists in *The Nation*. In the first of them he justly calls Theodore Dreiser a romantic rather than a realist. We hardly expect any letters of protest on this, however; the point is beginning to sink in. But when will the young Communists begin to see the equally obvious fact that they, too, are caught in the great Romantic delusion?

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A Man Who Knows Publishing

FRANK SWINNERTON, one of the best of publishers as well as one of the best of writers, has put his reflections on the business of writing and publishing into a book which should be in the hands of everyone who takes more than a casual interest in literary matters. *Authors and the Book Trade* (Knopf. $2.00) might be said to sum up a lifetime spent in the heart of the complicated subjects with which it deals. Mr. Swinnerton says of himself in his prefatory note "I have been in the publishing trade since I was fourteen [that is, since 1898], I was a publisher's reader from 1910 until the end of 1925. I have written twenty books, and from 1910 until the present I have been a reviewer". During all that time he has been a shrewd and reflective observer, and has enjoyed the intimacy of authors, publishers, and journalists. As an author he has been successful and unsuccessful, praised and slated. If anyone knows the publishing world, Frank Swinnerton does. It is fortunate for the sake of better understanding of a much misunderstood calling that he has presented us with his conclusions. In part his book overlaps that excellent book which Stanley Unwin wrote a few years ago, *The Truth About Publishing*, but on the whole, and particularly in the subtler psychological problems, it covers new ground; the two books together give a clear and accurate picture which will enable the merest layman to find his way among the mysteries of publishing.

Mr. Swinnerton will be remembered with pleasure by old BOOKMAN readers for the London Letters which he contributed from 1920 to 1927, under the name "Simon Pure". We have always believed that they were the best foreign *chroniques* of the kind ever done. They still make excellent reading in the files, or in the collection of them published under the title of *A London Bookman* (Martin Secker has now issued the book in his inexpensive series "The New Adelphi Library".) Mr. Swinnerton explains in his preface that *Authors and the Book Trade* also grew out of his association with THE BOOKMAN, the germ of the book being an article he contributed on "Authors and Advertising". Here he drives home that truth so unwelcome to authors and to publishers of literary reviews, that "advertizing does not sell books"—meaning that advertizing alone is almost powerless to effect sales. Other chapters deal with literary agents,—Mr. Swinnerton rates their services high—the size and price of books, the task of the publishing-house editor, booksellers. This last chapter, as well as chapters on reviewers and on the reading public, are more relevant to English conditions than American, but they are full of sound judgement applicable anywhere. Mr. Swinnerton is hopeful that the radio can be used to spread the knowledge and appreciation of books; but if England, with its state-controlled B. B. C. and high standards, is far from accepting his rather obvious recommendations, how far must this country be!

In his first chapter (following an introduction on the urge to write which is less successful than the rest of the book), Mr. Swinnerton tackles that question of endless perplexity, the first to be asked by everyone turning his mind to publishing, and subconsciously asked daily by most of those engaged in it: Why are so many books published? Why do fourteen thousand books come from the presses annually in Great Britain, and ten thousand in this country, most of them inevitably doomed to small sales and lost money? His penetrating analysis of the kinds of books that swell the total

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YVOR WINTERS

HOWARD BAKER

FOUR MEMBERS OF THE "GYROSCOPE" GROUP

The work of the group is described by Mr. J. V. Cunningham in an article on p. 703 of this issue. A portrait of Janet Lewis, another member of the group, was published in the September "Bookman".

BUNICHI KAGAWA

ACHILLES HOLT

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ELIZABETH ELEANOR SIDDALL

the subject of Violet Hunt's new book, "The Wife of Rossetti", reviewed in this issue.

volume deserves to be read at full length, but we will essay a summary.

1. Books published to round out the lists of new publishers. Young publishers are forced to issue what they can get. The pick of the manuscripts go to established firms; the new and struggling firms get mostly the leavings. And since they must go through the motions of being a general publishing house even before their brilliant strokes have enabled them to function properly as such, they must put out inferior books.

2. Books published because the publisher, while not liking them himself, thinks that they will appeal to that vast mass which is vaguely called "the public". Mr. Swinnerton contends that books thus deliberately chosen for their "best-seller" potentialities are usually worst-sellers; that "the best-seller occurs only when author, publisher and public are in accord", and reflect the mentality and emotional preoccupations which are those of a large number of persons. He calls an attempt to achieve this artificially "an act of amateurishness", but finds the publishing of many books thus accounted for.

3. Books for the publication of which the author pays.

4. Books by friends and relations of a publisher's successful authors.

5. "Sprats to catch mackerel": books accepted only because their authors can influence the destination of some desirable manuscript; or the unhappy efforts of usually successful authors.

6. Books by persons famous in other walks of life.

7. Books still under consideration which are recommended by "an old friend" of the publisher and accepted without thorough examination.

8. Books published because they are "commercial articles". This applies particularly to the very large houses; houses that "manufacture and circulate so many books that they forget the books before they are out; they expel (I will not say publish) a book because they feel it is bound to be published by somebody and may as well be in their own catalogue as elsewhere".

Mr. Swinnerton concludes this painful view behind the scenes with a cluster of still further motives underlying the confused and confusing overproduction of books:

These, then, are a few of the reasons why books are published. Not all the reasons, for there were over fourteen thousand of them last year, and I cannot imagine what thirteen thousand of those reasons can have been. "Ignorance, madam, pure ignorance," as Doctor Johnson said. No doubt pure ignorance accounted for a good many. Good hearts, optimism, recommendations, opportunities, cash payment, optimism, cowardice in face of somebody very appealing (a publisher once published a book because, he said, the author cried all over his carpet), bad taste, the need for a sixth or a twelfth novel to make an even number, a craze for books upon a particular subject, optimism, the sudden offer of a book which some other house was said to be after, the desire to please a great one (but a great one this time who is engaged in the publishing trade), optimism—some one or other of these reasons will account for a large proportion

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of the books issued each year, or, as the phrase goes, "constantly poured forth by the press". I suppose that about one hundred of the books published each year are good. About one thousand are worth reading.

Pre-Raphaelites and Peacocks

IF *Ellen Terry's Memoirs* had not been lately discovered and re-issued, a future generation, finding them, would have wondered what in the world we were thinking of to let so much charm and humour lie buried so many years. They were not widely appreciated when they first appeared serially in 1907, nor was the book publication, under the title *The Story of My Life*, very successful in 1908. It is more by luck than wit that we have them today, for we obviously owe them to the popularity last year of the Shaw-Terry correspondence and its recoil in the much less popular Gordon Craig biography. Ellen Terry did not work by blind genius; she studied constantly, and she had a keen intelligence and a mind of her own. Did anyone else laugh at the Pre-Raphaelites in the 1860's? Plenty of people did later. But Watts's "child wife", sitting silent as she was bid when distinguished guests visited the household governed by the three married friends of the painter, "Beauty", "Dash", and "Talent", (Dash was the most domineering of all, we'll wager) evidently watched and listened with a less complete adoration than anyone guessed. At any rate, her memories of them, brought in by a reference to Miss Herbert, are cruelly apt.

Miss Herbert "looked like the Blessed Damosel". She "was not a remarkable actress, but her appearance was wonderful indeed. She was very tall, with pale gold hair and the spiritual, ethereal look which the aesthetic movement loved". Ellen Terry herself was not, her daughter says, considered a Pre-Raphaelite type. According to an unnamed artist in the notes to the *Memoirs*, she was "not nearly floppy enough". But if Rossetti never painted her, she did draw a portrait of him, which can well be compared to the painting by Holman Hunt reproduced on this page.

Holman Hunt's oil painting of Dante Gabriel Rossetti, from "The Wife of Rossetti".

When any one was the object of Rossetti's devotion, there was no extravagant length to which he would not go in demonstrating it. He bought a white bull because it had "eyes like Janie Morris," and tethered it on the lawn of his home in Chelsea. Soon there was no lawn left—only the bull! He invited people to meet it, and heaped favours on it until it kicked everything to pieces, when he reluctantly got rid of it.

His next purchase was a white peacock, which, very soon after its arrival, disappeared under the sofa. In vain did Rossetti "shoo" it out. It refused to budge. This went on for days.

"The lovely creature won't respond to me," said Rossetti pathetically to a friend.

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The friend dragged out the bird.

"No wonder! It's *dead*!"

"Bulls don't like me," said Rossetti a few days later, "and peacocks aren't homely."

It preyed on his mind so much that he tried to repair the failure by buying some white dormice. He sat them up on tiny bamboo chairs, and they looked sweet. When the winter was over, he invited a party to meet them and congratulate them upon waking up from their long sleep.

"They are awake now," he said, "but how quiet they are! How full of repose!"

One of the guests went to inspect the dormice more closely, and a peculiar expression came over his face. It might almost have been thought that he was holding his nose.

"Wake up, little dormice," said Rossetti, prodding them gently with a quill pen.

"They'll never do *that*," said the guest. "They're *dead*. I believe they have been dead some days!"

Do you think Rossetti gave up live stock after this? Not a bit of it. He tried armadillos and tortoises.

"How are the tortoises?" he asked his man one day, after a long spell of forgetfulness that he had any.

"Pretty well, sir, thank you . . . That's to say, sir, there ain't no tortoises!"

The tortoises, bought to eat the beetles, had been eaten themselves. At least, the shells were found full of beetles.

And the armadillos? "The air of Chelsea don't suit them," said Rossetti's servant. They had certainly left Rossetti's house, but they had not left Chelsea. All the neighbours had dozens of them! They had burrowed, and came up smiling in houses where they were far from welcome.

EDITH SITWELL

who returns to the past that she loves, and which she celebrated in "Alexander Pope", in her new book, "Bath".

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EDWARD J. O'BRIEN

the well known anthologist of short stories, who has just published a biography of Nietzsche, "Son of the Morning".

Trying as Rossetti's affection was for these unfortunate animals, his wife must have suffered even more. Perhaps it is a recompense that she is written down in a biography of her own, by Violet Hunt, which is reviewed elsewhere in this issue, even though the title keeps her still in the background as *The Wife of Rossetti.*

The Best British Stories

MR. O'BRIEN'S selection of the best British short stories for 1932 has just come from the publishers, Dodd, Mead & Company. Mr. O'Brien believes that "the new current of magnificent creative expression which has become so strong in America during the past two years offers far more vital promise for the future than anything which England can show", and he is more than faintly apologetic about the twenty-four stories he has chosen for this collection.

In view of Mr. L. A. G. Strong's remarks on the short story elsewhere in this issue, further strictures on the rather amorphous prose which Mr. O'Brien is ready to dignify with the classification may lead to confusion of counsel. We will say only, then, that of the stories chosen for this book, four are tales of children, ten turn in some way on the supernatural, and four more are, it seems to us, anecdotes pure and simple. It is hard to believe that this is the best England has had to offer in the past year, since England is still the home of Martin Armstrong, A. E. Coppard, Sheila Kaye-Smith, Sylvia Townsend Warner, T. F. Powys, and Rebecca West—to name only a few masters of the short story *genre.* However, *de gustibus;* not to mention definitions.

Gyp

MADAME LA COMTESSE DE MARTEL DE JANVILLE, the strange, plump, bright-eyed little old lady of eighty-two who, under the pseudonym of Gyp, has delighted two generations of Frenchmen with her novels and plays, died last June; but it is only now that the story of her life is beginning to be told in the French reviews. That life covered a remarkable span of events. Born in 1850, two years before the third Napoleon proclaimed himself Emperor, she took in her stride the rise and fall of the Second Empire, the Prussian war, the bloody founding of the Third Republic, and the World War, in which her grandchildren fought and fell. When the Government left Paris in 1914 before the threat of German artillery, she said quietly: "Of course I shall stay here in my own house; it is used to bombardments. There are already five shells in the roof—not German

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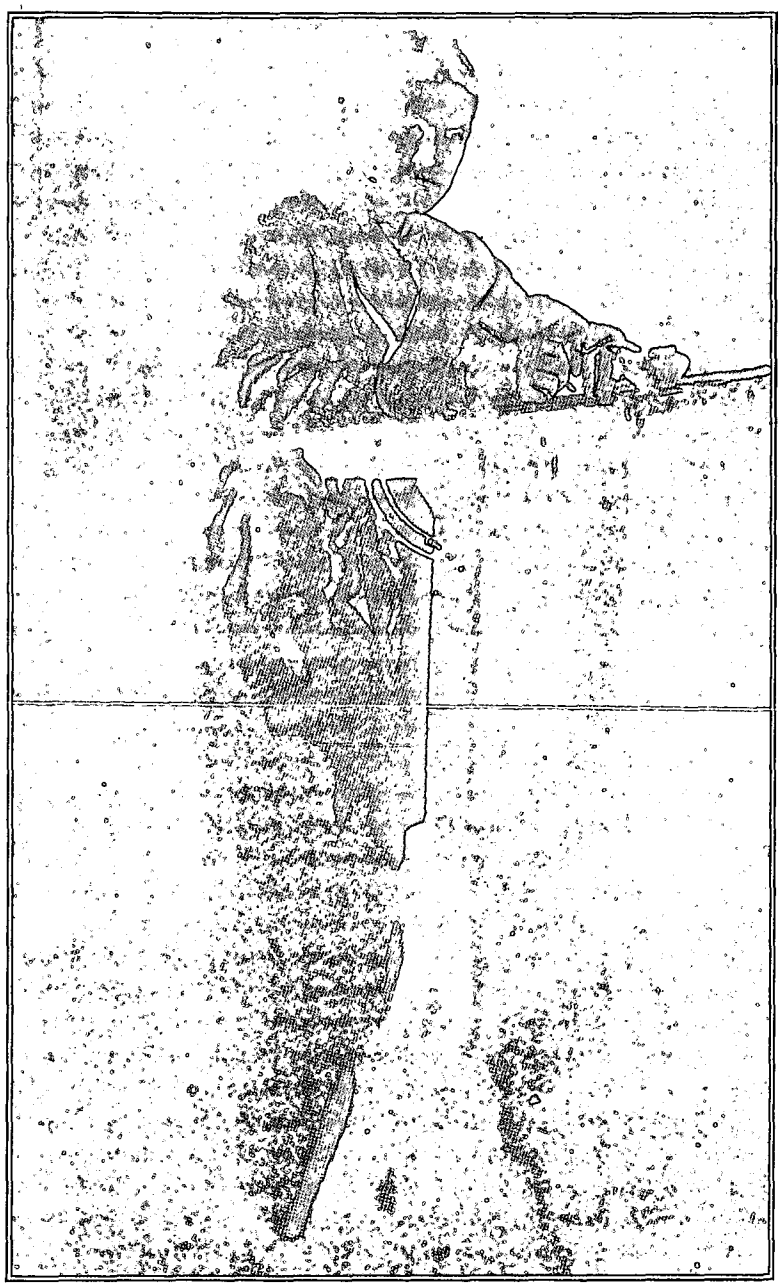

DAVID GRAHAM PHILLIPS AT WORK

The third of "The Bookman's" series of photographs reproduced from old files. This picture was taken shortly before Phillips's death at the hands of a maniac in 1911 and appeared in "The Bookman" for March of that year. Phillips's memory has recently received the tribute of a careful biography and loving memorial by his friend and literary executor, Isaac F. Marcosson. The photograph shows Phillips in the posture and costume which he invariably adopted for writing his novels. He seldom went to his desk —or rather printer's table—before ten o'clock at night, a practice dating from years of service as night editor on a city daily, and when the mood was on him. It was not unusual for him to write steadily eight to ten hours at a stretch.

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ones at that, but French, fired in 1871 by the troops of Versailles!" She was passionately interested in horses and riding; she painted delightfully; she was a passable acrobat; she loved fencing and prize-fights. Indeed, even in her later years, she was so active that her seventeen-year-old grandson, later killed in action, wrote her from the front in 1914: "Dear Grandmother—I'm busy setting out barbed wire in front of the lines; you've no idea how much fun it is, for it's something you haven't *yet* tried". She never retired until five in the morning, and on Sundays not until after six-o'clock Mass; during the last thirty-five years of her life she was content with an average of from three to four hours' sleep. In the fifty years between the publication of her first novel, *Petit Bob*, and her death, she published more than a hundred novels and plays. The list would be too long to begin to quote, but her own favourites were *Loulou, Petit Bleu, Une Passionnette, Autour du Divorce, Plume et Poil*, and the *Bob* stories. In America, her work was almost unknown except in school editions.

* * *

Perhaps the most amusing tale concerning the life of this extraordinary French noblewoman that has lately been unearthed concerns her first attempt at authorship. She was living at the time (in the early days of the Republic) in her chateau at Maxéville, near Nancy, and on this occasion was hostess to a rather mixed group, including the Bonapartist Prefect and his wife, and Charles Haas, whom Proust later took as a model for Swann. The dinner conversation struck her as so amusing that she decided to write it in dialogue form and send it, anonymously, to the *Vie Parisienne* (then a journal of a different nature from today). It appeared in print, and she followed with a dozen more such dialogues, again anonymously. Finally, in the personal column of the *Vie Parisienne*, there appeared a notice requesting the "officer from Nancy with the large handwriting" to call at the office to receive the payments owing him. Madame de Martel went, bearing with her a sample of the "large handwriting", and then became a regular contributor under the pseudonym of Gyp, although for two years more her true identity remained unknown.

The Coming of the Cars

Since, in wandering through old files of The Bookman, we came upon that piece about the terrific inroads which the automobile was making into love stories in the neighbourhood of 1906 which we quoted in our September number, an amused reader has called to our attention a subsequent phenomenon, also reported in The Bookman—namely, the terrific inroads which automobiles were beginning to make upon authors of love stories in the neighbourhood of 1907. "Every now and then", wrote the alert editor of The Bookman, "we read of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle driving a new high-powered car across Germany or France with the dash of an Étienne Gérard and the imperturbability of a Dr. Watson. Max Pemberton [The British author of *My Sword for Lafayette*] was one of the pioneers of the sport and knows the automobile from 'starting crank to differential', as they say." Then the editor becomes defensive.

> Nor are American writers at all behindhand at the game. We printed about a year ago a portrait of Mark Twain, "seventy years young", looking out at life from the tonneau of a Model S Oldsmobile. Booth Tarkington, who recently returned from Europe after an absence of nearly two years, owned during his stay in Paris and

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its environs a F.I.A.T. and a Clement-Bayard in turn, expressing a frank preference for the latter. Richard Harding Davis's name appeared in the papers a year or two ago as the purchaser of a Cadillac, but judging from the adventures and appearance of The Scarlet Car in the story of that name which appeared last spring, Mr. Davis has probably long since been graduated into the four- or six-cylinder class. A few weeks ago, at least, Irving Bacheller was still controlling the destinies of a single-cylinder Cadillac. Thomas Dixon, Jr., began as a motorist with a White Steamer, but has recently become converted to the gasolene car. Mrs. Frances Hodgson Burnett and her son Vivian Burnett are joint owners of a Winton and also a Pope Tribune runabout.

Perhaps readers today are less interested in what their favourite authors do, or perhaps their favourite authors don't do anything equally interesting. In any case, it seems a far cry to the day when it was news for THE BOOKMAN to report that "Stewart Edward White runs a two-cylinder Maxwell runabout with pronounced success (!) in the State of California".

This, That, and Thatt

MISS V. SACKVILLE-WEST has one very modest reform to suggest in the writing of English, and felt strongly enough about it to put it into immediate effect in her own most recent book, *Family History*:

"In this novel I have spelt the word 'that' in two different ways: either with one 't' or with two", Miss Sackville-West writes in her foreword, "in order to differentiate between the conjunction and the demonstrative or relative pronoun. I fear that this innovation may irritate many readers. It has irritated me, in reading over my own manuscripts, for the unfamiliar is always irritating until it has taken its place as the familiar.

"I am no friend to phonetic spelling. I prefer to think that foreigners to our language must struggle with their own difficulties in the matter of such words as plough, cough, thorough, through, though, rough; words, which, spelt in the same way, are pronounced quite differently. Or with such words as Hugh, hew, hue, you, ewe, knew, gnu, view, lieu, queue; words which, spelt differently, are pronounced in the same way. I prefer to think that even the English young, like the foreigner, must grapple with the task. I should like to see the decimal system introduced into England, to save the English young many hours which might be better employed than in wrestling with our extraordinary and obsolete calculations in pounds, shillings and pence; rods, poles and perches. But I should not like to see the English language wholly shorn of its very peculiar peculiarities.

"Nevertheless, I do believe that in the interests of clarity, the addition of the extra 't' should abolish for ever the confusion of thatt ambiguous little word."

Of course it would be easy enough to get flippant at the expense of Miss Sackville-West's reform, to start off on a paragraph of parody with "One must remember that thatt thatt is not thatt that that is used—" and so on; but as a matter of fact one feels no inclination to jeer at it. There is certainly a question as to whether or not the new procedure does not confuse more than it clarifies. It seemed to us that there were very few passages in *Family History* which were made immediately clearer by the use of "thatt", and that the unregenerate mind, refusing to come to terms with the strange new word, merely saw in the extra "t" a suggestion to thicken the sound of the final consonant, or to emphasize the word as though it were in italics. One read such a sentence as "Miles, what are you doing to thatt boy?" alter-

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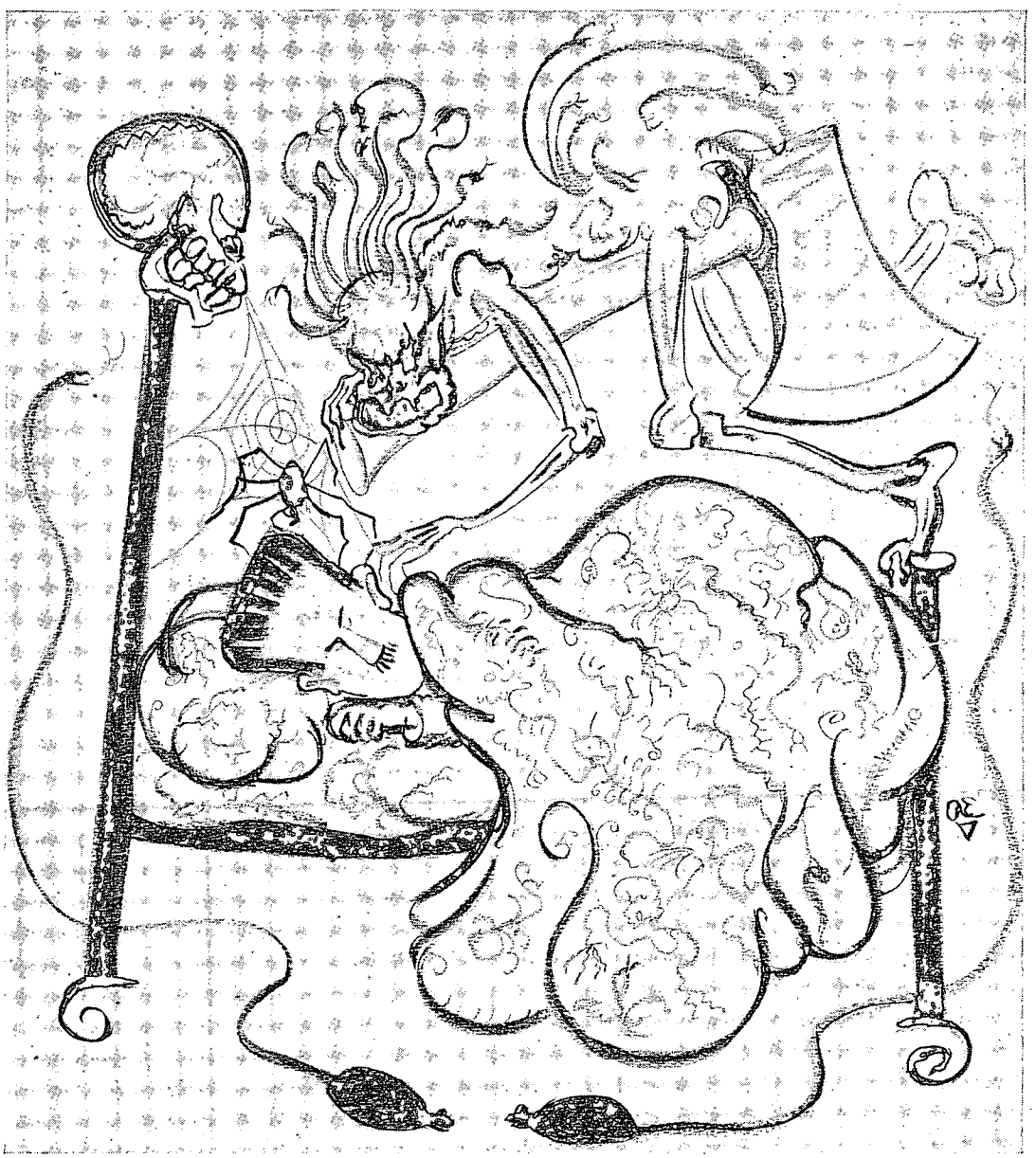

MR. FAULKNER IS VISITED BY THE MUSE

A caricature by A. E. Fisher.

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L. A. G. STRONG

the versatile British author whose article on short stories we publish in this issue.

nately as "Miles, what are you doing to thaattt boy?" or "Miles, what are you doing to *that* boy?"; whereas, of course, the emphasis should fall on either "what" or "are" if the question is to convey what it was meant to convey. Actually the innovation seemed to lead to far more confusion than it obviated. We suggest that the reform be made in legal documents and legal documents only, where alternative readings give rise to more than temporary misunderstandings. But lawyers will be the last people in the world to change their style.

In the Bookman Twenty-five Years Ago

[*November, 1907, Number*]

NEW BOOKS REVIEWED: *The Fruit of the Tree* by Edith Wharton . . . *The Shuttle* by Frances Hodgson Burnett . . . *His Own People* by Booth Tarkington . . . *Arethusa* by F. Marion Crawford . . . *Helena's Path* by Anthony Hope . . . *Redcoat* by Alfred Ollivant, author of *Bob, Son of Battle.*

AMONG THE ADVERTISEMENTS: To run through the year 1908 in *Scribner's* magazine—*The Trail of the Lonesome Pine* by John Fox, Jr., author of *The Little Shepherd of Kingdom Come* . . . The Harrison Fisher Book for 1907—*A Dream of Fair Women*—A Series of Superb Drawings in Colour, Each Portraying in Mr. Fisher's Most Brilliant Manner Some Lovely Woman . . . His Engaging Originality and Cleverness Promise to Win Him Fame Greater than Any Man Ever Had—Arsène Lupin . . . The Divine Sarah Has Written with Her Own Hand in Her Own Way with Her Own Inimitable Verve Her *Memories of My Life* . . . Home from the country is Lady Anne, Her face and arms all brown with tan; To get them white and keep them so, She uses Hand Sapolio.

BEST BLURB: *The Lion's Share* by Octave Thanet—A Romance of Modern American Life, which means not "love in idleness" but hotter-veined "love in business". No one can tell about it so charmingly as does Octave Thanet. Along with the love-story there is a mysterious disappearance, followed by a thrilling chase; the whole being flavoured with rich and kindly humour. By the author of *The Man of the Hour.* With six beautiful pictures. $1.50 postpaid.

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PALE-EYED PRIESTS AND HAPPY JOURNALISTS

by Douglas Bush

READING Keats's *Letters* for the *n*th time lately, I felt a perennial and melancholy question pressing upon me more insistently than ever. Poetic feelings, it is said, lose their flow soon after the poet passes twenty-seven. But most of us are not poets, and were born only with the power to read. Why does even that capacity—or rather the capacity to read with intense excitement—desert us as we grow up (especially if we have been predestined to be professors of literature) and leave us pale-eyed priests in the arid temple of Knowledge? I myself am only sitting, rheumatically, on the steps of the temple, but I record some doleful personal symptoms because even an *experimentum in corpore vili* may inspire corroborative testimony from others.

I remember when, at the age of fifteen, I got my first really "serious" book, Lord Rosebery's *Chatham*. From that I spread out in the eighteenth century through Trevelyan, John Morley, and others, arriving finally at the supreme joy of Burke. (I didn't understand much of Burke, but what matter?) For months I took part in the daily life of the House of Commons, uninspiring as that assembly might seem to have been. Then came my first impressive and opulent "set", the miscellaneous works of Macaulay, along with the fascinating *Life and Letters*. I read and re-read them, from the contributions to *Knight's Magazine* to the Indian Penal Code, and quoted Macaulay at the table until my relatives begged me to desist. Becoming a college freshman, and wrestling with the speeches of Thucydides and the choruses of Aeschylus, I felt an access of strength in the recollection of Macaulay's vivid marginalia on the classics that were his daily companions.

Well, with time and increasing knowledge Macaulay slid into the niche established for him by relentless posterity. Like the old man Petrarch describes, who shuddered at the thought of faults in the divine Cicero, I struggled for a while against the unanimous verdict. I saw or was made to see Macaulay's glaring sins, his lack of ideas and subtlety, his flamboyant, nickel-plated rhetoric, his complacent Whiggery. How happy one should be in outgrowing such a writer as Macaulay! Doubtless the truth shall make you free, "a captive victor that hath lost in gain". Now, wiser and more learned, I can only remember that to a boy in his teens it seemed that there was hardly a great man or book or movement that Macaulay had not touched with a noble and infectious enthusiasm—and no author now, no matter what magnitude, can awaken those school-boy raptures. And so with other books. In my eighteenth-century phase I lived and moved in Boswell. Later, when a graduate student, I read him once a year by way of preserving my sanity. Now I can't find time for even that annual retreat, partly, I am glad to say, because I know him by heart, partly, I am less glad to say, because of a multiplicity of futile duties; and partly because sanity seems to be no longer within reach.

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Is it inevitable that, when knowledge comes, love flies out of the window? (I am speaking, I may repeat, of the academic cohort of the damned.) There was a time when one read as a lamb gambols, because of the "blessed joy de vive" that animated Mr. Polly's friend Parsons. One had never heard of bibliography; "sources" and "influence" were unknown words. But the true scholar cannot read without looking for something; pursuing Syrinx, he gathers reeds. Farewell, happy fields—as Macaulay quoted, on leaving literature for mathematics—where joy forever dwells! Hail, horrors, hail, infernal world!

While some few academic persons combine learning, critical acumen, and gusto, and others, not too learned perhaps, retain their youthful freshness by reading what they like and paying no heed to the call for "production", most of us, however innocent and unwarped our youth, wake up—or sometimes do not wake up—to find that we have become of the devil's party without knowing it. (I speak on this point as one having some modest authority, since I have produced my share of gritty, repellent, and negligible contributions to knowledge.) We don't enjoy and assimilate great authors; we don't, to quote Macaulay again, read Plato with our feet on the fender (there have been worse definitions of the scholar than that), we crawl about looking in haystacks for needles that have happily, and perhaps deliberately, been "overlooked by previous investigators".

To find readers and writers who have not lost the exuberance of adolescence we must turn to the journalists. In them, for the most part, appear the zest, the recklessness, the sometimes happy ignorance that we once possessed, before we bowed under the tyranny of caution and fact. When Mrs. Paterson says that the sonnets of Elinor Wylie are "the most beautiful in the English language", we step down the voltage and understand that Mrs. Paterson likes the sonnets very much. In the style that comes so trippingly to the pen of one accustomed to writing for unemotional learned journals, this encomium—if one permitted one's self the frivolity of a critical opinion—would run somewhat in this fashion: "The sonnets of Mrs. Wylie, though they can hardly be placed beside those of Sidney, Shakespeare, Milton, Wordsworth, Keats, Rossetti, Meredith, and others, are not without merit. They show some marked influence of Donne". A while ago I listened, along with several thousand other people, to a lecture on Shakespeare by Mr. Christopher Morley. Of Mr. Morley's enthusiasm there was no doubt: he took Shakespeare under his wing and expounded him as only a fellow author could. One envied his freshness of feeling. And yet, soured as one becomes by the itch for accuracy, one had misgivings. When the lecturer was not patronizing the scholars he was weaving pleasant webs of fancy and misinformation in a way that recalled Gilbert's suggestion for settling the Shakespeare-Bacon business; if the coffins of the two could have been on the platform during Mr. Morley's discourse, one of the bodies would have turned over.

Many popular critics have a kind of boyish omniscience, a self-sufficiency, that arouse sheer awe in minds dulled by stale orthodoxy. Some time ago *The New Republic* offered to its austere and highly educated readers a review of a translation of Catullus by a young man who casually mentioned that he knew no Latin; imagine such a phenomenon, not in a learned journal, but in any European review! Youthful exuberance runs to supercilious condemnation as well as to extravagant praise; one remembers the young man who applied to John Morley for a post on his paper on the ground that he had "a turn for

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invective". Mr. Clifton Fadiman, for example, combines the functions of Ko-Ko and Pooh-Bah; he is the Lord High Executioner among reviewers and he was born sneering. After devoting fully six weeks to the study of Goethe, Mr. Fadiman reported that the Olympian had nothing to contribute to his intellectual and spiritual development; any reader of Mr. Fadiman's reviews will agree. A couple of years ago, by the way, the young liberals were having fun with the simple-minded dualism of the New Humanists. If there is any dualism or dichotomy more simple-minded, any critical instrument more blunt than that of the young literary Marxists now on the rampage, one wonders what it is. Perhaps the only parallel, for critical discrimination, is the Queen's "Off with his head!" While disclaiming a Marxist literary creed, *The Nation* takes off the head of Sir Walter Scott because "he was not profound about anything at all. He supplied excellent entertainment of a superficial sort . . .". *The Nation* would doubtless admit, with its own arid earnestness, that Homer was not profound either. Scott is one of the few magicians in our literature who have created worlds of their own, peopled with living men and women. What novelist in English is profound? Not Fielding, Dickens, Thackeray, Trollope, nor anyone—except perhaps Mr. Dos Passos.

Journalistic critics have their peculiar shortcomings, and scholars have theirs. I remember a conversation with a young man of great learning and productivity, in the course of which I felt moved to defend Mr. Oliver Elton as a scholar who possessed taste and something of style. "Style!" ejaculated the young man, aghast at such irrelevance. More lately an academic critic who has made some genuine contributions to knowledge was amazed because the author of a book he was reviewing had bothered to meet the objections of "a group of London literati". The literati in question were Messrs. T. S. Eliot and Herbert Read, who might be thought worth notice. And just why "London" should be a withering term of disparagement one does not know, since the town is not without literary associations; anyhow the geographical slur lost some force in being hurled from Urbana, Illinois.

Thus in the United States we seem to have a Right and a Left and almost no Center. On the one side is the scholar who, in Bagehot's phrase, resembles a thistle, prickly all over with facts and incapable of fruit. On the other is the literary journalist who, like Petulant, is an enemy to learning and relies altogether on his parts. There are, it may be said (with scholarly caution), many virtues on both sides. The deplorable fact is that there are two sides, each of which needs the good qualities of the other. Intercourse between the two consists mainly of random sniping. A young poet—to take a polite instance—in reviewing Mr. Chesterton's *Chaucer*, which perhaps tells more about Mr. Chesterton than about Chaucer, spoke in a familiar strain: "Chaucer has been written about at length chiefly by scholars, and Professors Kittredge, Manly and Pollard, to give examples, have not the ability of Mr. Chesterton to stir and entertain their readers". That is the instinctive reaction of the literary person in the United States; scholars, being scholars, are always dull and heavy, and journalists, being sensitive, gifted, imaginative fellows, are lively and readable. After all, what is truth compared with an epigram? If any author has been treated with more vivacity and persuasive charm than Chaucer has been by Professors Kittredge, Manly (and Lowes), I do not know who he can be (one must suppose that the reviewer had not read their writings,

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although, since he translated Chaucer, one may hope he had); but these scholars, some of the illustrious exceptions to the rule, had the initial disadvantage of writing with full knowledge of Chaucer and his age.

When we look abroad we do not find such a distinct cleavage between scholar and critic. In England and France, while there are "pure" scholars and journalistic critics, there are also scholars who can write and writers who know something. One has only to call up such names as those of Ker, Raleigh, Anatole France, Gaston Paris, or, among the living, Gilbert Murray, Mackail, Grierson, Legouis, Cazamian, Gide, Edmund Blunden, Herbert Read, Humbert Wolfe, Virginia Woolf, Desmond McCarthy, and dozens more. We have in the United States a few distinguished scholar-critics, and a very few scholarly men of letters, such as Mr. John Jay Chapman and Mr. Albert Jay Nock, but when we begin to count them we find, unhappily, that our fingers are quite adequate. Our scholars are not excited by good books, our journalists are too much excited by mediocre ones, and there is no health in us.

One wonders if we can ever capture that fine spirit of amateurism which, abroad, inspires so much of the best scholarship and criticism. It does, indeed, sometimes inspire insipid garrulity or worse, but on the whole its results are better than our extremes of professional research and uninformed journalism. When English and French scholars write learned books, they seldom fail, however technical their subject, to keep us aware that they know what literature is and that they enjoy it. And when English and French journalists write about contemporary books, we are aware that they know literature of the past. In the United States the scholars leave their aesthetic faculties at the door of the bibliography room, and the journalists, ministering to the popular taste for only the newest books, need no resource beyond their own inner light. As with alcohol, we have no civilized *via media*; we must be tipplers or teetotalers. In regard to books we have alternative destinies before us, either "premature balditude" (to use the phrase of Mark Twain's "late Dauphin"), or protracted adolescence. The adolescents certainly seem to have a better time than the hollow men. I think I shall burn my card-index and return to Boswell, perhaps even to Macaulay. I wonder if schoolboys of the moment are romping through Proust and ecstatically reciting the flowing periods of Joyce? And will they too in time become old fogies, thinking wistfully of the good clean fun of their youth?

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THE "GYROSCOPE" GROUP

by J. V. Cunningham

THE HISTORY of a literary group that advocates no political program, and that has developed almost entirely outside of New York or the Continent, has significance beyond the merits of the individual writers. It suggests interesting possibilities from such native groups, held together by a common interest in their craft, and committed neither to the furtherance of class struggle nor to an aggressive regionalism. The case of the *Gyroscope* group, which casually came together at Palo Alto, California, some years ago, is especially interesting because at least three of the members are in the front rank of contemporary literature. These three are Yvor Winters, Janet Lewis, and Howard Baker. They edited four issues of a mimeographed quarterly, the *Gyroscope*; this gave the name to the group. The first issue appeared in May, 1929, the last in February, 1930; there was an average of twenty-six pages to an issue. Although the number of subscribers never exceeded 180, many of them were among the leading literary figures, and the *Gyroscope* became the most prominent little magazine since the *Transatlantic Review* and *transition*. It was certainly the most distinguished. Several writers who lent distinction to it—notably Katherine Anne Porter, Caroline Gordon (whom the magazine introduced), Pearl Andelson Sherry, and Grant H. Code—did not live near Palo Alto, and since we are concerned with the effect of personal association, we shall reluctantly omit them from the discussion. The group have in common the fact that they are primarily interested in their craft; the general trend of their work is away from the varieties of "romanticism" and "modernism" toward what is loosely called "classicism". What this classicism consists of is best shown by a brief summary of each writer's achievement, since the group's critical principles are only a formulation of the ideas implicit in each writer's work. They have, individually, different backgrounds, private subject-matter; their unity as a group lies simply in an agreement on critical principles, on what qualities of style are desirable; and this is to say again that they are a craft group, committed to no political program, and thus without community of subject-matter.

The publication of *The Invasion* by Janet Lewis (Mrs. Yvor Winters) this fall, turns public attention on the group, for this novel is the most extended piece of work by any one of them as well as one of the more important novels of the season. *The Invasion* is a chronicle of the Johnston family of the Sault Ste. Marie; its theme is the dispersal of the Indian culture, and, in the gradual decline of the family fortune, the failure of the assimilation of the two cultures which it represented. John Johnston, an Irish gentleman, entered the fur trade at the Sault in 1791, and, in a few years, married the Woman of the Glade, daughter of the hereditary chieftain of the Ojibway nation, a splendid woman who is the central character of the book. The children were thus, as Johnston

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proudly said, of the royalty of two continents. Mrs. Winters knows both the region and Indian life thoroughly. She brings the tale—crowded with historic characters and incidents, the rivalry of the great fur companies, the War of 1812, the industrialization of the Great Lakes area—down to the present day. One of the firmest descriptive passages of modern literature, toward the close of the book, pictures the freighters passing through the locks, engaged in the iron trade. An exciting novel, it is also history, ably summarized, dramatically presented, and thoroughly documented.

The Invasion is perhaps the best example we have of the regional chronicle, and should serve as a model to the many in America who are reconstructing the history of their locality, for to accomplish this is to do more than arrange and enliven documents. Historical workers are seldom rhetoricians. Yet dispassionate history is not the result of a disinterested scientific approach—disinterest is boring—but of an adequate rhetoric which, although it may give false information, never gives false values. Livy is thus superior to those who refute his facts; and Mrs. Winters excels even Livy in this one respect, that her facts are documented and sound. Her most valuable quality, however, is a sustained and capable comment, a rhetoric more able than that of any other woman in America with the exception of Miss Katherine Anne Porter and a few others.

Each chapter of *The Invasion* presents a key incident, or series of incidents, in novel form. The interval between chapters, with other antecedent information, is adroitly worked into each opening; an extraordinary amount of fact and historical summary is slipped over with only occasional confusion, and without requiring any effort from the reader towards mastering the material. This method, however, effective as it is, becomes the only serious limitation to the book, and it could not honestly have been avoided. Continuous narration requires a simple scheme which events can be seen to justify, so that pointing the moral will occupy the transitions. That is the common historical method, but, in this case, the available schemes are suspect. The story of the Ojibway could have illustrated either the supremacy of the white and the degeneracy of the Indian, or the converse, which is the more popular theme today. With an admirable hesitancy, and a method appropriate to it, Mrs. Winters has gathered what is known of the case for both races. Hers is the only book I know which treats the Indian as casually as the white.

Mrs. Winters's poems, though few, are even more distinguished than her prose. They are quiet and calm, untroubled by the modern nervous disorders, and they have a personal charm which arises from her settled background and from the sense of assurance afforded her by the consciousness—which she alone of the group enjoys—of being part of a continuing literary and family tradition. Technically, the poems are remarkable for swift and successful metrical variations within common forms. Two early pamphlets of verse have been published, *The Indian in the Woods* (1922) and *The Wheel in Midsummer* (1927); a general collection should be eagerly received.

The most mature of the writers whom the *Gyroscope* introduced is Mr. Howard Baker. His first novel, *Orange Valley,* like Mrs. Winters's, is a definition of locale, but by means of dramatic plot rather than historical chronicle. The descriptive writing is of the first order; life in the San Joaquin Valley, the orange country of California, is fully portrayed. A casual reader opening at the chapter on the coyote hunt will find nothing

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more elusively precise in Cunninghame-Graham. This is high praise. If the novel fails to rank among the great, this is partly because the opening chapters are clumsy. The plot, although difficult to describe, is well-constructed. Charles Swanson, of Pennsylvania Quaker family, takes up a ranch in the valley to make a home for the girl with whom he has had an affair back home. The theme is the most serious available to any writer—the effort to continue a moral attitude in a world that no longer credits it; and it is here reduced to the simplest terms, to the problem of love. Swanson is an over-moral character; the girl is a garden variety American wench. She delays coming out, and finally jilts him for an assistant stage manager. In the mail-order marriage of an old character of the valley, and in the love story of Swanson's younger sister, the theme is repeated and varied; it is, in a way, the familiar theme of *Hamlet*, where in a world out of joint "the desire for action converts itself into an intense feeling of determination". And this is the second and fundamental reason for the book's failure: Swanson's love for the girl is less love than a scruple; the girl's return at the close of the book is trivial. However, if we compare this with the similar and more popular novels of Mr. Glenway Wescott, we see that Mr. Baker's local colour is relevant, his attitude mature, and that he displays some comprehension of his characters and scene.

Mr. Baker's poetry deals with the same general subject-matter as his novel. At present, it is the most finished part of his work. An early poem, *The Quiet Folk*, is an apt example, illustrating the quality of his poetry, and serving as a commentary on its theme:

Secured by hedge and oak the building stands
A solid, dark and weathered brick, remote
From youth or age; it is become a pole
Fixed by the even rows of dead. If God
Moved here, shared spirit with the quiet folk
He left no miracle for testimony.
The linëd hands, where no stigmata bloom,
Are folded on the thighs; the eyes bend down.
The bare dark walls permit no idols of
The senses. These are people who unbare
The empty fragmentary bone, they hold
It rigid, they chart emptiness with courage.

This is quiet unassuming poetry in which even the curiously powerful conceit in the seventh line—"The linëd hands, where no stigmata bloom"—does not obtrude. Mr. Baker's chief fault is an occasional awkwardness in the opening of his poems, and in the line endings, as in the ninth and eleventh lines above; an awkwardness that disappears from the latest and best poems, which are still in manuscript.

The third important prose talent of the group, Mr. Achilles Holt, already has a general reputation, although his six or seven published stories have appeared in the more obscure magazines. Each story has been three-starred in Mr. O'Brien's annual collections. *Little Pancho* in *This Quarter* for December 1931, and *Soccogee Country* in *Pagany* for Spring 1931 are probably the stories most easily found. In viewing the common life of his region, the Sabine country of Texas, which is one of the more "backward" in the States, he differs from contemporary local-colourists in not identifying illiteracy with idiocy; the characters are responsible human beings. The stories are notable for their richness of sensuous perception, but this is unsupported as yet by a definite theme, a fault that is almost an advantage. Certain excellent writers—for example Mr. Hemingway and Mr. Callaghan who are alike in this—simplified their theme too early and too easily, so that their later work is a repetition of their former. Essentially more complex and serious than either of these two, Mr. Holt

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promises to achieve more; when he finishes the novel he is now working on and his stories are collected, we may see how well the promise has been kept.

II

Mr. Yvor Winters is the central figure of the group, and the most considerable writer. More clearly than the others, he displays in his five books of verse their common tendency away from romantic excess and its preoccupation with the fringes of consciousness, not by ignoring romanticism, which is practically impossible for a poet without a settled background, but by subjecting its materials to classical form. If a writer begins with experience, which is essentially formless, strict form will prove to be a strait-jacket. True classicism begins with a form and then selects from the only available material, one's private experience, whatever is pertinent to the realization of the abstract form in concrete poetic terms. It holds, with Mr. Eliot, that the poet has a *medium* to express, rather than a personality. But with an occasional exception such as the short poem *Animula*, Mr. Eliot's poetry lacks a firm formal outline; *The Waste Land* and *Marina*, for example, use a very fluid movement for the sole purpose of giving the flavour of a personal experience; they express not a medium but a personality; they exemplify the reverse of his critical principles. The Gyroscope group, however, as Mr. Winters's work most clearly exemplifies, tend more and more to a purely classical approach. A representative selection from his earliest pamphlet of verse, *The Immobile Wind* (1921), all of it written before the age of twenty-one, will be found in the Monroe-Henderson anthology, *The New Poetry*. The best of these early poems define in terms of a landscape a quality of hallucination which many have found in the New Mexico of which he writes, but which is by no means essential to it. The second pamphlet, *The Magpie's Shadow* (1922), is an experiment in compression, in eliminating everything except the essential perception; it contains twenty-eight six-syllable poems. This description of the quality of hallucination in a landscape by concise, elliptical images is developed to its highest point in *The Bare Hills* (1927), Mr. Winters's first mature collection. From this book he derives his reputation as the last, most authentic of the Imagists—and the most unpopular.

There are several superficial reasons for this unpopularity; they are worth examining, since they involve prejudices that affect, in one way or another, each member of the group. The book is written in the free-verse metres—a subject that has been hopelessly confused. The reader who is interested in what Mr. Winters attempted to do will find his metric well explained in a letter to the *Saturday Review of Literature* in September 1930. In the second place, the reader of poetry today as at all times is accustomed to sort his poets into piles. If distinguished by vivid imagery, the poet is an Imagist; if distinguished by abstract statement, he is a Metaphysical Poet; and should he become unobtrusive, he is an Academician. The terms are used as loosely as I have used them; these are the three critical piles, and the public permits no liaison between them. It was the strange and vivid imagery of *The Bare Hills* that first attracted attention, and this attention itself has operated against an appreciation of his later work.

The best poems in *The Bare Hills*, indeed, have lost with the public because they exceed the Imagist program by introducing metaphysical comment. *Quod Tegit Omnia* and *The Rows of Cold Trees*, for example, alternate and almost contrast vivid imagery with

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rather difficult abstract statement. Now the place of metaphysics in verse is often misunderstood. Abstract statement alone lacks the sensory detail which gives it experiential validity, that is, the impingement of an idea on actual circumstance. But on the other hand pure imagery can only deal with a theme by implication—which, in the end, is confusing, for there are social beings who pride themselves on being able to take a hint and consequently discover innumerable hints that were never intended. The distinction is, of course, a truism; but the disassociation of imagery from its appropriate inference is very marked in modern literature. Only in such a situation—when the reader is likely to go astray, and the poet must elaborate his comment, either because he disagrees with what inferences will commonly be drawn from his material, or because there are no common propositions to refer to—will abstract statement seem to be especially "metaphysical". It is for this reason that his name was also included, by reviewers, in their lists of contemporary Metaphysical Poets.

The closing section of *The Proof*, the songs, was disappointing to all his admirers. The imagery was more subdued and the analysis simpler. The critical Imagists, in the loose sense of the term, were already displeased that a maker of fine phrases and sharp observations should temper them; and the Metaphysical Poets, finding less and less speculation, saw only a degeneration of powers, a growing and distasteful academicism. But does simplicity of manner come only from a failure of powers? I should say that successful formulation is clarifying; the demons disappear in the sunlight. The attitude becomes a habit of thought so that in succeeding poems what was explicit becomes an implicit part of the conception. Qualities of sound and the metre themselves serve as comment and perception. Thus a more elaborate poem may be less complex than a simple one, for true simplicity is not a beginning but an end; it is the last resolution of inherent and recognized complexities. Because they represent a resolution of the romanticism of the earlier work, the songs in *The Proof* and in the following book, *The Journey and Other Poems* (1931), and the shorter lyrics written since, seem to me superior to the earlier poems. Why they have not pleased the Academicians, to whom our other critics left them, is explainable for this reason: the Academicians demand an *initial* simplicity, which is the result of evading rather than mastering the difficulties. Consider, for example, the fact that the Academicians preferred A. E. Housman to Robert Bridges, especially before the latter's death and the publication of a long, dull poem consecrated his name.

The constant association of a group of writers over a period of years—in this case practically from 1928 to 1932—rarely results in their writing alike, particularly when their talents and training are diverse and when, apart from their association with one another, each concentrates on his own hereditary background. They will have in common not rhetorical devices, for these are conditioned to a great extent by the social material they deal with, but rather certain general formal properties, or—what is the same thing—certain philosophic attitudes, that qualify the approach to their material. The unity which association has imparted to the Gyroscope group may be stated in general terms as an almost blind assertion of control as opposed to extreme contingency; of the timeless present as opposed to fleeting time. It is an attitude which is figuratively summarized in the title of Mr. Winters's first pamphlet, *The Immobile Wind*. Its chief implication is, at

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least for the present, the practical identification of the will and the intelligence, though the eventual tendency of the group is away from this identification, forced on them by circumstance, by the romantic disturbance and the unsettled social life, and towards the traditional categorical distinction between the two.

Apart from considerations of attitude, the very presence of literary activity will tend to develop the younger members of a group much more rapidly than usual. This is true of Bunichi Kagawa, Henry Ramsey, and Rowena Lockett, of whom each possesses a remarkable talent. Mr. Kagawa is a Japanese immigrant, a bi-lingual poet, who has had a book of English verse published, *The Hidden Flame* (1930). The latter half of a poem, not in his book, will give a fair idea of his quality:

O the stubborn poverty locked in brain!
What love, what quick rain
That comes upon what summer's desolation
Shall know my door? The quiet of ruin
That cannot be crushed even with sleep
Supports me with its wide labour of stillness,
As I, heavy as the slow crumbling pillar of light,
Stand away alone from the snare of dream.

The quality of Mr. Ramsey's poetry is very similar to that of the late Hart Crane, and it has a good deal the same danger—the danger of magnificent rhetoric unsupported by a sound theme. His best poems are in manuscript, but two lines from an early sonnet will serve as an illustration:

Alone I view a rivage where the blown
Sea-salts fissure and charge eternity.

Of the three, Miss Lockett may eventually be the most important; she is very witty, with a sort of terrible casualness, and her prose is as accomplished as her verse. Of all contemporary writers, she is most like Miss Marianne Moore, although, of course, inferior to her at present.

III

Readers today are less interested than they were in the individual excellences of writers, and more interested in whether or not they represent a *force*; that is, they are less interested in what a group proposes as individuals than in what it opposes as a group. A list of what the *Gyroscope* opposed is contained in its first issue. Briefly summarized, it opposed all doctrines of emotional and religious expansionism, since they minimize the moral and intellectual responsibilities of man; all doctrines of humanitarianism or "service", since they teach the individual to "help" his fellows before civilizing himself; all doctrines which advocate that a poet express his country (Whitmanian Rousseauism) or his time (Dadaism and allied heresies). It opposed the delirium in data of the realists as well as the delirium in vacuo of the super-realists. And finally it opposed the "emotional receptivism of Mr. Eliot and Mr. MacLeish, who employ despair as a drug and a luxury, and who, therefore, may be justly suspected of never having actually experienced it".

On the contrary the *Gyroscope* proposed that the forms of art are a method, perhaps the only satisfactory one, of ordering and evaluating experience. Whether the group can be regarded as a force, or not, their expression is undoubtedly forceful, and the bulk of their work demands attention.

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CONCERNING SHORT STORIES

by L. A. G. Strong

I SUPPOSE that every modern short story writer who strives also to be an artist has been told time and again by editors and critics that half the things he writes are not short stories at all. Editors tell him this first; before there is a volume for the critics, there will have been a number of individual stories for the editors. The information usually perplexes him, and he sits down, as I did, to try to reason the matter out.

When an editor declines the work of a beginning writer, he does so because it does not resemble what he wants. I am supposing that the work is competently done, and that there is no accidental reason for declining it: i.e., that the author has offered his wares sensibly, after some study of the periodical chosen, and that his work is not patently unsuitable for reasons of length or subject. The editor will say, in the case of a short story, that it is too gloomy, that it has not enough action, is obscure, or lacks a plot. He will suggest that it is not a short story at all. This sort of rejection letter, which in America is usually entrusted to some lady underling, usually begins "My dear Mr. So-and-So, We have read with great interest and pleasure your charming sketch, but much regret et cetera et cetera. . . ."

The beginning author at this point indulges in a little research. He ascertains, for example, that the work of Katherine Mansfield was not accepted by the editors of fiction magazines. Yet the reputation of Katherine Mansfield stands high. Deeply concerned, he searches the leading fiction magazines for the names he is learning to venerate. I will not say that he does not find them; but, in a year's files he finds one or two of them, once or twice. Other names, not mentioned in the circles wherein he moves, appear a dozen or a score of times. There are, of course, several of the safe big names, and just a few of the middle, rising names, on whom the editors appear willing to take a chance.

He returns from his researches, and sits down, facing a hard fact: that between editors and the best-praised short story writers there exists a vital difference of opinion as to what constitutes a short story. The presence of the big names means nothing one way or the other, he decides. They are there for their names, not because the quality of their contributions especially delights the editor. The younger names owe their appearance to a fluke, or to the editor's desire to show how up-to-date he is. They are not there on their intrinsic merit as creators of literature. If they were—if the editor really looked upon them as a standard—there would be no place for the remaining nineteen-twentieths of his magazine's contents.

The beginning author then turns for help to the critics. He follows with interest the books of his admired contemporaries, as they are noticed in the press. Barely has he read with pleasure in *The Thunderer* that the title story of Blank's new book "approaches perhaps more nearly than any written in this decade to the ideal of the perfect short story",

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when he finds the *Daily Seismograph* complaining that it is "a novel in brief", and *The Examiner* sadly reminding the author that as a "sketch" it is far too slender to bear the title of the volume upon its shoulders. He meets Blank one day at lunch, and is informed that six or seven quite different things have been written about this title piece; not about its quality, but about its form. He realizes why such an artist as Coppard calls his stories tales, in order to escape from these disputes and to persuade critics to judge his work for what it is. I mean no disparagement of critics—Heaven forbid. I only mean that they do not all understand the term "short story" in the same way.

For the editor's views there are special reasons, mainly economic, which we can consider presently. For the critic's views there are a whole number of quite natural reasons, most of them connected with personal allegiance to this or that author of strong personality, contracted at an impressionable age. We are all human, and the kind of story we admire becomes, unless we are very careful, the right, or even the only, kind of story.

I suggest that the easiest way out of all these difficulties is to stop arguing about what is or is not a short story, and to accept the author's decision upon this point (the editor's decision, as we know, is always final, but he is deciding a different question). It may be that I am mentally too easy-going, but so long as I derive real stimulus, knowledge, or pleasure from a short piece of prose fiction, I am quite content to allow it its title without argument of any kind.

When I put down my pen, settle back comfortably in my chair, and think of the two words "short story", a crowd of titles surround me. The foremost are easily recognizable. There are Flaubert's *Un Coeur Simple*, Tchekov's *The Black Monk* and *The Head of the Family*. There is an anecdote of Herodotus, and another, even less reputable, by Petronius. There are several of Maupassant, including *Miss Harriet* and *Mademoiselle Perle*, and one whose title I cannot recall, which ends "vous m'avez rendu un fameux service". Coppard is present under many guises, such as *The Higgler*, *Darby Dallow's Tale*, and *Fifty Pounds*: so is O'Flaherty with *The Shilling*, *The Cormorant*, and *Mackerel for Sale*. From a crowd of Lawrence's stands out *The Prussian Officer*, from a crowd of Katherine Mansfield's *At The Bay*. There are Conrad's *Gaspar Ruiz*, Wells's *Country of the Blind*, Conan Doyle's *The Striped Chest*, and W. W. Jacobs's *A Change of Treatment*. There are Sherwood Anderson's *I'm a Fool*, Hemingway's *The Undefeated*, and Gouverneur Morris's story of the man who was ordered at all costs to deliver an important document to the Admiralty and dressed as a woman, when the liner was torpedoed, in order to deliver it. There are Pritchett's story of the penniless man in the oyster dive, and Wilbur Daniel Steele's *Thirst*. There are Elizabeth Bowen's *Joining Charles*, Britten Austen's *An Affair of Honour* (though its love interest is conventional), and George Birmingham's story of Doctor Whitty and the pier. But why go on? All these have only one thing in common, namely that they are short pieces of prose fiction. I suggest that we will do better to allow the name of "short story" to them all. It does not matter whether what happens in a story be expressed in action or in thought. It does not matter if the story have a plot, or depend wholly for its effect upon the emotions and reflections it arouses in the reader. The only thing that matters is that each piece of short prose fiction should have an aim worthy of an artist, and should succeed in it.

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II

A celebrated editor has been complaining in print that the art of writing good short stories is virtually lost. None of the younger writers, he says, can write now as did So-and-So and Such-and-Such. It would probably be nearer the truth to say that no one *does* write as did So-and-So and Such-and-Such—for the simple reason that modern writers are no longer interested in writing like that. That vein has been worked out. A leading literary agent (whose name I will not for worlds disclose) said recently at a public dinner that the popular magazines were necessarily twenty-five years behind the times. He was exaggerating, I need not say; but it is undoubtedly true that the magazines incline, and necessarily, to be conservative. All else apart, they have stern economic considerations to face. They must please their public, and any change they make must be made imperceptibly.

I can speak on this point with a little knowledge, as I have written what we may term without offence both kinds of short story. When I sell a short story to a popular magazine, it is not because it is better or worse then any other short story I may write. It is not because it has been deliberately written for that particular magazine. It is either because what happens in the story is expressed almost altogether in terms of action, or because the thought in the story is commonplace. That is to say, the average reader will find nothing in it to puzzle or displease him.

For example: I once wrote two stories on the theme of marital infidelity. I am aware that, in giving a brief synopsis of each, I shall make them both sound extremely silly; but the point is worth a little self-sacrifice. In the first story a young wife receives from her lover a present of a man's dressing-gown. It comes ostensibly as a birthday gift from the lover and his wife, who are friends of the husband: so that there is no need for him to be suspicious. When he comes home in the evening, the wife shows it to him, with a certain trepidation. He says nothing, but goes into the bedroom to wash. She hangs up the dressing-gown in the bedroom, and returns to the drawing-room, where she sits down and plays the piano. When she stops, he calls to her from the bedroom to go on. Happy at this indication that all is well, she goes on playing. When she stops for the second time, there is complete silence. She goes into the bedroom, and sees the beautiful dressing-gown, lying on the bed, all slashed to bits with a razor, and smeared with toothpaste. While she gazes horrorstruck, her husband leaps out from behind the door, coat and hat in hand, and rushes out the door and down the steps, yelling "Yah! Yah! Yah!"

In the second story, a husband, returning unexpectedly at night, discovers his wife with a lover. His first emotion is one of laughter at the ridiculous figure cut by this gentleman. Later, he tells his wife she must sleep in the spare room. She is contrite and tearful, and argues with him. "Very well, then," he says, "I will." She protests that he cannot: the bed is not made up. She will go herself. He lets her go with misgiving, thinking how uncomfortable she will be. Starting to undress, he sees himself in the glass, and is reminded of the ridiculous appearance of his rival. This finishes him. He calls his wife in again, and falls asleep just as she is beginning to explain to him how it all came about.

For the first of these stories, which is violent and bizarre, and in which the man behaves like a savage, I received a generous price from a popular magazine, plus a request for more. The second, in which the man ex-

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hibits ordinary human consideration and a sense of humour, excited the scornful indignation of every editor to whom it was offered. For the man in the first story was "sound" and "right". He expressed himself oddly, but there was no doubt about the soundness of his general attitude. The man in the second story had no right feeling, no principles. A man may forgive his erring wife, but only after a decent interval and a number of appropriate scenes. To let his wrongs slide because he was sleepy, and the thought of her discomfort was keeping him awake, is to outrage morality and to do the reader out of a legitimate bit of drama.

We see, then, that two desiderata for a story that is to be published in a popular magazine are orthodoxy in reaction to experiences and conformity to public opinion. Naturally, I am not suggesting that all magazine stories have to exhibit these characteristics. All I mean is that the magazine editor is bound by standards which long practice may lead him to regard as an essential part of a story, even as a criterion of its merit, but which are in fact purely accidental.

But we need not worry about these or any differences of opinion as to what is or is not a short story. Such differences are really the short story's finest asset, for they are preventing it from becoming standardized. If no one is agreed as to what a short story should be, the writers will shrug their shoulders and go their own way; which is precisely what we want to happen. They should do this serenely and philosophically, not in a spirit of outraged bitterness. It is easy for us, today, to be wise and admit many contrasted excellencies, but it was not so easy for those whose opinions had to be formed ten, twenty, thirty years ago, when a new art deriving from glorious and accepted models began to grow and multiply and spill out over the edges of the channel so carefully cut for its progress. Today, what uniformity is to be expected or desired in an art influenced by Flaubert, who made a character the thread for a marvellous and intricate tapestry: by Tchekov, who made a mood or an episode the imaginative key to the whole lives of its actors: by de Maupassant, whose skill lay less in plot than in the complete portrayal of a situation: by Conrad, by Kipling, by Lawrence, by Moore, and, already, by some of its own youngest practitioners? We not only do not know what a short story ought to be, but we do not want to know. The only safe thing is to allow each writer to call his work what he likes and to judge it severely, and without favour, by its own standards.

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LEONARD MERRICK

by Louise Maunsell Field

More emphatically than any other notable fiction writer of the present time, Leonard Merrick is a chronicler of the individual. What interests him primarily is the fortunes or misfortunes, defeats or triumphs of some particular man or woman, so that when one of his characters proves to be a type as well as an individual, one feels that it is the result of chance rather than intention. Dr. Kincaid, in *The Man Who Was Good*, is no more a typical physician than—well, than your doctor is, or mine; Peggy, of *The Position of Peggy Harper*, is as far from being a typical actress as the hero of *Cynthia* is from being a typical novelist. Their creator sees them as persons, not as representatives, perhaps because he himself is never concerned with movements or causes, never indulges in propaganda of any kind, save as his warm sympathy with every kind of artistic endeavour makes him the propagandist of a better understanding of the more obscure and struggling dwellers in Bohemia.

This avoidance of mass interests and stressing of the importance of the individual has permitted a few of the less discerning to regard Leonard Merrick as a mere teller of tales, stories always interesting, always witty and charming, sometimes comic, often ironic, and occasionally pathetic; never really important. Yet the truth is that he deals, not with superficialities or matters of evanescent significance, but with those fundamental desires and impulses which lie deeper than class or nationality, are more universal than dislike for prohibition or aspirations towards social reform. It is because he chooses to write about human beings rather than so-called timely topics, that his books "date" so amazingly little.

Take for example the two novels which, more than any others he has written, approach what may be called social questions: *Violet Moses* and *The Quaint Companions*. The first tells the story of a young girl, a Gentile, who married a Jew; the second is the history of a Negro tenor who married a white woman, of their mulatto son, a poet, and of a girl artist who was plain of face and deformed of body. *Violet Moses*, which was Mr. Merrick's first novel, has been described as a study of the mixed marriage problem, and some reviewers have even expressed regret that Mr. Merrick did not continue to work along these "problem" lines; yet to any thoughtful person it is entirely evident that Violet's troubles arose, not from the fact that she was a Christian married to a Jew, but because she was a sensitive girl of fine perceptions and cultivated tastes married to an obtuse vulgarian. As if to emphasize this point, the man Violet eventually loved and with whom she might have been happy was himself a Jew. The clash shown is not between religions or races, but between attributes still more fundamental—differences in outlook and appreciation which can make two human beings utterly incomprehensible to each other. *The Quaint Companions*, Mr. Merrick's biggest and finest, though not his

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best-loved novel, goes further than matters of colour, deep down into that sometimes tragic contrast between the inner nature and outward appearance of an individual which misleads all save a few. His whole life long, David Lee had suffered because of his repellent exterior. Yet when he himself was put unawares to the test, it was to the girl with the pretty face and the shallow soul that he turned, not to her who had abundant sympathy and keen intelligence, but was physically unattractive. Again the problem is individual and of an individual, affected of course by environment and circumstances, differing from that of any other as each of us differs from any other, yet always probing down into the very roots of the nature we share.

Is there, for instance, any one of us who has not known something of the nostalgia of *Conrad in Quest of his Youth*? Yet who else would have behaved precisely as did that most temperamental and most delightful of heroes? It is entirely characteristic that Mr. Merrick's novel of an unfaithful wife and a forgiving husband should be put forward, not as a study of marital relations, but simply as *One Man's View*. For with him it is always one man's view; not what men in general or even men of a particular kind or class ought to feel or do, but what some one man in particular felt and did.

One reason for this intense individualism may be that a majority of Mr. Merrick's more important characters are artists of one kind or another, while none of them is a reformer, social worker, or politician. He has been called "the novelists' novelist", and might with equal truth be called "the short story writers' short story writer", for though the United States is rather accustomed to pride itself on what its authors have accomplished in this latter branch of fiction, there are few of them who could not learn a good deal from Leonard Merrick. He is himself more interested in the short story form than in any other, regarding it as the one in which perfect artistry can most nearly be attained, that perfection of artistry he has so diligently pursued. How diligently I realized when, a few years ago, Mr. Merrick showed me something of the work he had done in preparing his tales for publication in that Definitive Edition whose scheme and production were, I believe, unique in literary history.

Praised by reviewers, enthusiastically applauded by those fellow-workers whose approval was best worth having, Mr. Merrick was nevertheless not over-popular with the British public. Several of his contemporaries agreed that something must be done about this since, as Sir James Barrie averred, they felt that if they were popular and Leonard Merrick was not, then there must necessarily be something wrong with *them*! So a group of which Barrie was one united to promote the publication of a Definitive Edition, each volume to be prefaced with an "Introduction" by some well-known writer. H. G. Wells, Sir Arthur Pinero, W. J. Locke, Barrie of course, and several others, most of whom were then personally unknown to Mr. Merrick, wrote the prefaces and engineered this unusual effort to give honour where they sincerely and justly believed honour was due.

That honour had long since been rendered in these United States. For if Great Britain was slow to realize the value of the quiet, unassuming man who had learned many things but never acquired the trick of blowing his own trumpet, America had been swift to appreciate the beauty of his clear and flexible style, where the right word slips into the right place as if by magic, the dramatic interest of his stories, his enchanting humour, his deft play of irony, his sympathy with

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men, and more than all his extraordinary, almost uncanny understanding of women. Conrad and the completely delightful Tricotrin, Humphrey Kent and Dr. Kincaid, charming Cynthia, Bee Sorrenford, one of the best-drawn women in English fiction, fascinating Rosalind, Blanche Ellerton, and the rest of Mr. Merrick's long list, were already familiar to practically every lover of excellent fiction when, shortly after the appearance of the Definitive Edition, Mr. Merrick paid a visit to the United States. It was the second, not the first time he had come to this country. A quarter-century had elapsed between the two visits, and the difference was greater than any mere passage of time.

Leonard Merrick was very young, scarcely more than twenty, when he first arrived in New York, an actor seeking an engagement. Brought up in comfortable circumstances, his father's financial reverses had suddenly compelled him to earn his own living, and he had turned to the stage. Too sensitive and unassertive not to meet with even more than the novice's usual share of rebuffs, he was no luckier in New York than in London. He had already begun to write, and it was in a New York hall-bedroom that he wrote *Violet Moses*, while his funds rapidly diminished. But publishers proved no more enthusiastic over *Violet Moses* than managers had been over Leonard Merrick. Sick, discouraged, and practically penniless, he sailed for England. But if during that melancholy voyage he had day-dreams of a triumphant return, those dreams were destined to be outdone by reality.

For when at last he did come back, not to lecture or to write a book about the United States, but simply to express his thanks and his affection for the country which had been clear-sighted enough to perceive his artistic worth, it was to be welcomed as a visiting prince of literature. The best of social and artistic New York was eager to fête and to acclaim the slender, dark-haired, dark-eyed man, who was so ready to be pleased, so genuinely and generously appreciative of every trifle done for him, so completely unassuming and unselfconscious. To meet an admired author is to court disillusionment, but it can safely be said that not one of the many who had loved and applauded the writer was disappointed in the man whose personality proved even more engaging than that of his own Conrad. He never seemed in the least to realize how very much of a personage he was, and I can see him now as he sat in my living-room on New Year's Eve, quite disturbed as to whether the members of a professional women's club at which he was to be guest of honour would like what he meant to say to them or not. That he was conferring a very great favour on those same women did not even occur to this much belauded writer who has never learned the meaning of the word *blasé*, but retains as unaffected a relish for what one of his own playwright heroes calls "sugar-plums" as if he scarcely knew the taste of such sweetmeats, instead of having been literally showered with them. Perhaps it is because the praise he has received has come principally from those whose praise was and is worth having.

Too understanding to be other than tolerant, Mr. Merrick nevertheless detests affectation and pretence of every kind, these being the negations of that quality of courage he so admires. However greatly his heroes and heroines may differ from one another, they are all distinctly plucky. Tricotrin is blithe, irresponsible, temperamental, romantic; but it is his underlying bravery which wins our hearts. Whatever their faults, whatever their failings, no one of the men and women who

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climb attic stairs, wait in agents' offices and are turned down by editors, ever whines. Meenie, the blue-eyed little girl who looked as if she "needed happiness, and three good meals every day"; Christopher, deprived through no fault of his own of his one hope of escape from drudgery; David Lee, condemned to solitude; Bee Sorrenford, at whom people never, if they could help it, looked a second time—not one of them ever indulges in jeremiads, or bemoans the futility of life in general. Wherein they disagree utterly with most of the leading characters in modern fiction.

For Leonard Merrick is a realist in the true sense of that much perverted word. He paints sunshine as well as shadow, acknowledges that roses are as "real" as filth. Not that he ignores the withering of the rose, or the prevalence of filth. The elder Lee's slavery to a passion he knows to be degrading, Meenie Weston's Paris experience, these and others like them are drawn uncompromisingly, with no scanting of their ugliness, but with no delight in dirt for dirt's sake. Mr. Merrick can call a spade a spade, but if he never refers to it as a gardening implement or as "one of those things that are better left undiscussed" —to quote his own Bishop—neither does he see fit to describe it as a god-damned shovel. And no one can better convey the spirit of youth, its eager welcome to adventure, its inherent romanticism, its love of drama. Tricotrin, the young and usually poverty-stricken poet, is that spirit's very embodiment. He dramatizes himself so effectively that he forgets himself in his dramatization, falling in and out of love with amazing swiftness, the girl he adores being one-tenth real and nine-tenths imaginary. His friendship with Pitou, though more articulate than most, is one of those friendships between men Mr. Merrick delights in, and presents with exquisite skill. But behind the good fellowship and the laughter, the ambitions and the youthful self-confidence, the inextinguishable hope which illuminate the Montmartre garret and make a jest of hunger, there is always a realization of the "stark poverty" of that garret, and no slurring of the fact that hunger is more painful than romantic. Lack of money is an evil Mr. Merrick never pretends to minimize. Even a very real love cannot always withstand its corroding influence, as he has so admirably illustrated in *When Love Flies Out o' the Window*, that remarkable study of a man who could give lavishly, but was neither big enough nor generous enough to accept ungrudgingly.

Genuine realist as he is, Mr. Merrick is also what I called him several years ago, an author without a formula. His range is amazing. A Leonard Merrick story may be farce or melodrama; it may have the deft satire of *The Bishop's Comedy*, one of the best of English short stories, or the heartache of *Dead Violets*; it may be as amusing as the account of *The Suicides in the Rue Sombre*, as ironic as *A Pot of Pansies* or as mirthful as *The Tragedy of a Comic Song*; and his novels are no less varied. If he is often kind to his heroes and heroines, it is a kindness which never stretches probabilities, just as his sentiment never slops over into sentimentality, and while every Leonard Merrick novel is entirely Leonard Merrick, and quite different from the work of any one else, it would be difficult to find two books more completely unlike than the sparkling *Conrad in Quest of his Youth* and the tragic history of *The Quaint Companions*.

Yet however greatly the tales he has to tell may differ in theme and type, certain characteristic qualities can invariably be found. There always is a story to be told; there is always the crystal-clear style, which sparkles

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or glows, is stark or picturesque, according to the theme, with never a superfluous word, nor one ill-chosen; there is the insight which makes every character, however briefly sketched, a living person with, you feel, a story of his or her own which you would like to know. Then too there is the extraordinary gift of phrasing which gives the flavour of a personality in a sentence, the tolerance, the quick perception, the keen sense of life's ironies which make Mr. Merrick one of the most truly sophisticated and mature of twentieth-century writers.

Never has he allowed himself to be affected by literary "movements" or "schools", though his appreciation of his fellow authors is invariably generous and often enthusiastic. Always he remains completely himself—an artist in words whose work is most highly valued and best appreciated by those who share something of his sophistication, who know not only the easily seen depths but also the less self-evident heights of human nature, and passing beyond the cheapness of easy generalizations, have learned to realize that the mass is significant according to the quality of the individuals of which it is composed, and not according to their number.

Prophecy is always rash; but there are some at least who believe that just as that other individualist, Jane Austen, has endured long after most of her contemporaries have been forgotten, so also will the novels and short stories of Leonard Merrick continue to be read when this present century has become merely a memory.

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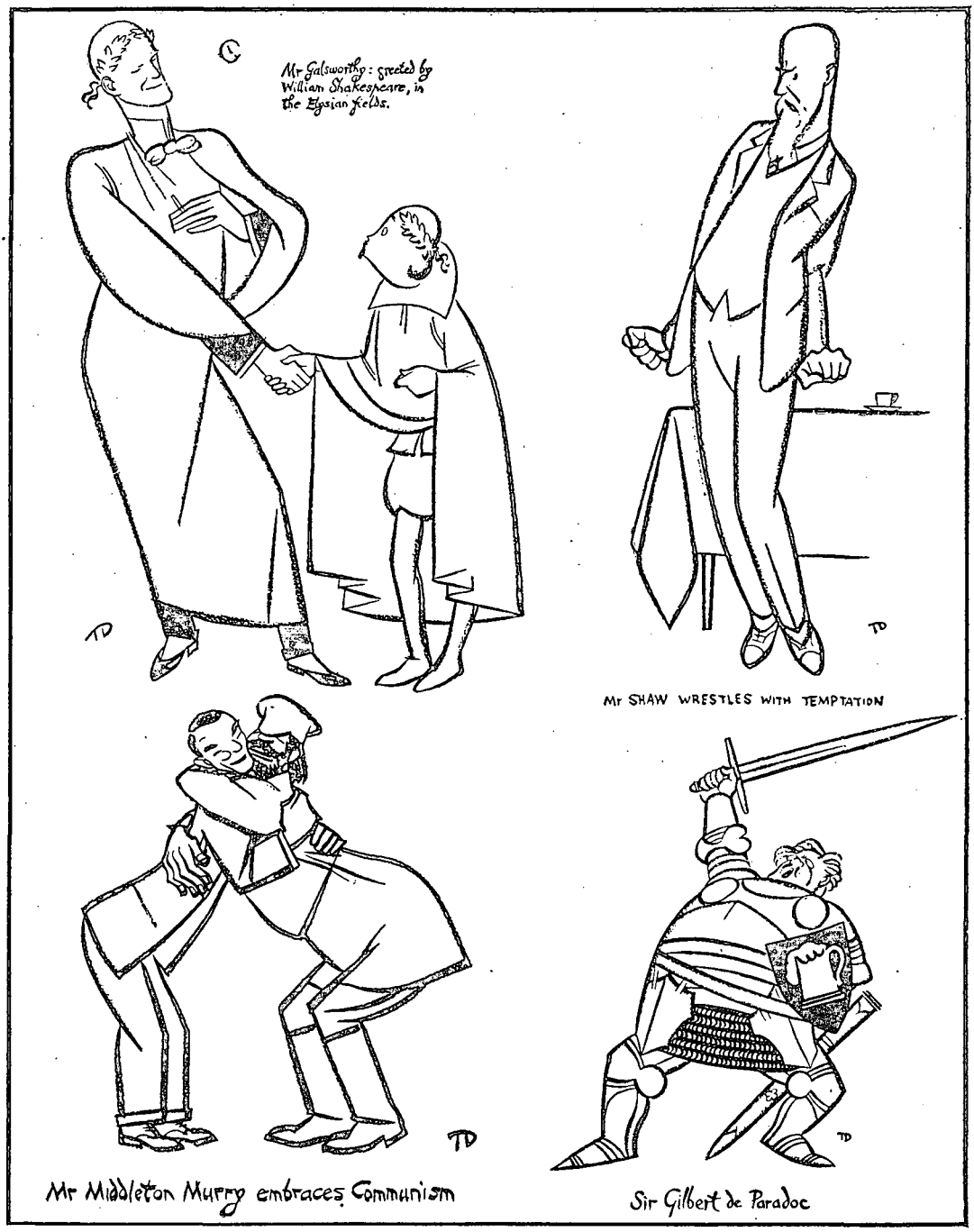

FOUR CARICATURES BY THOMAS DERRICK

selected from his witty series entitled "Literary Gents" which has been appearing in the London "Bookman" throughout the year.

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THE BOOKMAN'S SURVEY OF THE NEW BOOKS

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A SELECTED SHELF

EXPERIENCE AND ART: SOME ASPECTS OF THE ESTHETICS OF LITERATURE *by Joseph Wood Krutch* (SMITH & HAAS. $2.50)

MR. KRUTCH at thirty-nine is not really sufficiently aged to have written this book. It gives the impression of being the work of an elderly gentleman, brought up in the highest refinement of culture, who views the modern age with the eyes of one not precisely belonging to it and who yet cannot reconcile himself to any of the philosophies of the past. He minimizes their exponents: "There is . . . something singularly tame about their gospels, something plaintive and elegiac about their pleading, something which seems hardly adequate to influence very effectively a world which may not know where it is going but which is certainly going somewhere under the force of impulsions not to be controlled by the pious suggestions of frightened respectability". It may perhaps enlighten us concerning Mr. Krutch's opinions to learn that one of his two typical "prophets" of a world renewed through old things is Robert A. Millikan.

Mr. Krutch goes on to discover in the modern attitude toward the Machine a vital yet blind faith and acceptance similar to that which led the legendary crowd to carry "Cimabue's Virgin in triumph through the streets of Florence". And his dim vision of the future, duly and carefully qualified, is that of a civilization in which Art succeeds in revealing to mankind the now peripheral and unexpressed though felt perceptions, emotions, and valuations of the world of the Machine-man.

One cannot help feeling a certain impatience with Mr. Krutch's principal characteristic—an intellectual pride which could easily blind one to the real merits of his book. He can gravely assert: "Convictions of some sort are necessary for effective writing, either creative or critical, just as they are necessary for effective living, and life as well as literature has gone on because people have passionately believed—*on quite insufficient evidence*—that art, God, justice, duty, righteousness, and the rest consisted in this or that" (my italics). A statement eminently sound but completely vitiated by the incredible arrogance of the italicized phrase—a phrase which represents the horrible dilemma into which anyone who holds Mr. Krutch's views must fall. He is in the position of one who sees the necessity of belief, indeed urges it, but will not lower himself by yielding "himself with joy to the infantile comforts" of any faith in anything. The proper answer to such systematic and self-righteous scepticism is that ascribed to Tertullian: *Credo quia absurdum.*

In *Experience and Art* Mr. Krutch attempts an aesthetic which is built upon the assumption that "Nature" is not known to man, and perhaps cannot be known; that "Experience" is human perception; and that "Art" lies in any attempt to make "reality identical with desire" through the action of the imagination on Experience. From this Mr. Krutch is naturally driven to describe as varieties of art all sciences, all religions, all philosophies, as well as the fine arts proper

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and the art of life itself. He eloquently describes the interrelation of Art and Experience, and the mutual creation of the one by the other: Art, through the originality of some great genius, moulding the forms which Experience will take; Experience moulding the form which Art must take lest it become completely unrelated to life. Much of this analysis is brilliant and illuminating. But one is recurrently disturbed by Mr. Krutch's extreme sceptical relativism. For there is no arguing with him. Granted his premises, his system holds. Yet as soon as one concedes even so much as that Nature is at all knowable; as soon as the delights of modern epistemological theory begin a little bit to pall, Mr. Krutch's aesthetic, like a boulder in a landslide, falls to the ground and is shattered, breaking up into its component thousands of tiny, if scintillating, fragments.

HARRY LORIN BINSSE

INTERPRETATIONS: 1931-1932 *by Walter Lippmann, edited by Allan Nevins* (MACMILLAN. $2.50)

Most devoted readers of the *World* before its demise were perhaps equally devoted admirers of Mr. Lippmann; his subsequent shift to the *Herald-Tribune* and to syndication carried with it a large part of this audience, which associated his name as much as that of any man with the glories of the *World's* celebrated editorial page. Unfortunately Mr. Lippmann has always been somewhat more conservative than much of his audience. His views on such subjects as the tariff, foreign debts, reparations, the Republican Administration, agree with those of any person of liberal, or even radical views, but fundamentally Mr. Lippmann is a believer in those theories of individual liberty which are basic to the nineteenth-century faith in democracy. Of course he is too intelligent to give credence to any pure form of *laissez-faire* economics; he sees that the notions of the Manchester school are as completely outmoded in modern capitalistic industrialism as would be a belief in the flatness of the earth in modern science. But he obviously makes his concessions to *laissez-faire* with a very sensitive eye directed at the amount of human freedom which must be sacrificed in the bargain. And he is a good bargainer. He will not give up one iota more of freedom than is absolutely necessary. Hence his "betrayal" of the "cause" of many of his more Marxist adherents, who are essentially enemies of liberty, and who view with deep suspicion any attempt at the defence of individualism—a betrayal which is rendered artistically final, perhaps, by the dedication of the present volume to that wicked Republican and Capitalist, Ogden Mills Reid.

Interpretations gives permanent form to the best of Mr. Lippmann's contributions to the *Herald-Tribune*. Out of some two hundred articles, Mr. Nevins has selected about one hundred for preservation from the impermanence of newspaper publication, and we owe him a debt of gratitude. The selection has been admirably done. And the arrangement of the volume is above criticism. Each article falls under a major heading descriptive of its main emphasis: the depression, Mr. Hoover, Congress, the European situation, the Far Eastern crisis, the Seabury investigation, the American party conventions, et cetera. Within each class, the articles are arranged not chronologically, but in their purely logical position: from general to particular. Altogether *Interpretations* is ideally put together, and preserves for posterity the opinions, during a year of world-wide crisis, of the most acute of American editorial observers.

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For Mr. Lippmann must be granted that distinction. However much one may disagree with his underlying philosophy, as set forth in such books as *A Preface to Morals*, his analysis of specific problems is illuminated by extraordinary intelligence, sanity, and good sense. His mind and his style, which, like any man's, is a simulacrum of his mind, are beautifully clear. Indeed in an age which seems to the weary reader of endless commentaries almost wilfully muddle-headed, Mr. Lippmann's brilliant clarity is like a drink of water after bath-tub gin. And this clarity, which is coupled with an inner conviction and a high seriousness equally rare in our distressed era, lends what Mr. Lippmann says an effective authority almost unique in our society. Only by extensive quotation, which might easily be made from the present volume, could these aspects of his style be made clear. There is no space to do this here, and no need, for surely everyone able to read and think in America today has read something of Mr. Lippmann's. We have only to state the obligation which we owe to our most effective mentor. Future generations may never hear Mr. Lippmann's name, but it will still be true that of every practical policy, of every effective principle for which the future may praise our generation, Mr. Lippmann has been a staunch proponent.

HARRY LORIN BINSSE

A CULTURAL HISTORY OF THE MODERN AGE: VOLUME III *by Egon Friedell* (KNOPF. $5.00)

THIS—the "Modern Age" from the Congress of Vienna to the World War—is the *Götterdämmerung* of Herr Friedell's trilogy, and the imputation of Wagnerian form seems no less appropriate than the dedication of the whole work to Max Reinhardt. For, as one rounds out the reading of perhaps the most widely known post-War contribution to *Weltgeschichte*, one becomes unmistakably conscious of its keen dramatic construction, and more particularly one feels this final volume to be a third drama which fulfills with the swift, precise certainty of *Der Ring des Nibelungen* the tragic prophecies of the earlier two. Herr Friedell, one now realizes, is not only an historian with an extraordinarily wide and humanistic perspective, not only a capable philosopher in the negatively progressive method of Spengler, but also—and this is at least as important—a masterful and brilliant dramatist. It is from all three of these standpoints that he has contemplated and handled the huge theme of his *Cultural History*, yet at least one reader is left pondering whether the third aspect may not have been the chief motive as well as the determinator in execution. Certainly there is evidence for this belief, manifested in this last volume by an over-generous, although magnificently entertaining, consideration of the drama, the theatre, and the actors of the whole nineteenth century. And other unfailing characteristics of this dramatic talent are equally evident: for example, Herr Friedell's self-admitted preoccupation with personalities, already proclaimed as a premise in the manifesto with which the first volume begins. This premise, indeed, has its most fertile growth in the third volume; and since this volume spans the entire period of collective thinking and mass movement of the nineteenth century, it is hardly an advantage, nor does it do credit to the otherwise broad horizon of the author.

To come to the book's actual stuff, it is obviously impossible to compress into a brief review even a fair summary of a work of such formidable scope. Nor would such a summary be much more than a list of the

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names of hundreds of individuals from Metternich, Chateaubriand, and Grillparzer, to Wilhelm II, Van Gogh, and Shaw, without the omission of a single personality who left even the slightest cultural impress upon his time. It would, however, be distinctly unfair not to take space to praise Herr Friedell's brilliant characterizations of each of these personalities, the adeptness with which he has placed each figure in precisely its proper place in the picture, the uncommon combination of breadth and restraint with which he has seen these people and their work. But one cannot forbear asking if this is, after all, *Kulturgeschichte*—if cultural history is really no more than a record of personalities and their influence on culture. And as one asks, one becomes aware of omissions, particularly from this third volume, of facts so vital to *Kulturgeschichte* that it is impossible to consider the state of culture today—the final product of Herr Friedell's Modern Age—without giving them an important place in the argument. In other words, what Herr Friedell has left out is just that which his dramatic talent (if it is not genius) has told him is not stuff for the theatre—the powerful, very nearly all-powerful, currents of mass thought, mass spirit, and mass emotion which flow below ground, more often than not far less dammed or channeled by personalities than Herr Friedell is ready to admit. He may even say, as he does in his first volume, that all this is but the reflex of the individual, but if it is, certainly he has not, in this final book, bared more than the slightest liaison between the great men of the nineteenth century and the *Massenbewegung* which has really brought us to the crisis of the modern age. Nor, obviously, for that matter, could he do more with his premise as a base. Having omitted even the slightest reference to the gradual spiritual foundering of the masses since the middle of the last century, the progress from religious emancipation by grace of science to the wild "freedom" of the mass soul, Herr Friedell has left out what surely is the approaching night of his dusk. He has, to be sure, mentioned the creator of every nineteenth century palliative and antidote to religion, from Renan to Freud, but nowhere has he traced that fundamental stream of religious uncertainty, growing into doubt and finally into chaos, first flowing far beneath the Olympian heights of his personalities and finally pouring over at the turn of the century as a turbulent Niagara, sweeping with it all the sanctions, all the standards of its lost leadership, until the final "collapse of reality".

No, in a final consideration one can scarcely call Herr Friedell a *Kulturhistoriker*. At best a belletristic historian, at worst a wholesale biographer, he has nevertheless written one of the important books of our time, not only for the influence it will wield because of its own peculiar excellence, but also as a kind of factual thesis for the philosophy of Oswald Spengler and *The Decline of the West*. As such it should deservedly find an audience in America; unfortunately, however, in one of the most inexcusably careless and incompetent translations which it has been this reviewer's pain to read.

ALFRED M. FRANKFURTER

THE STAGE IS SET *by Lee Simonson* (HARCOURT, BRACE. $5.00)

MR. SIMONSON says in the foreword that his book is to be taken as "one craftsman's analysis of his problem". It is indeed a sort of apology for his practice of the scene-designer's profession over a period of some years. His theme, repeated again and again, is that

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the designer is only one element in the theatre and therefore cannot, by himself, create the ideal theatre in New York at the present time. The theatre serves the society in which it exists; the designer serves the theatre, and so (he implies) is not to be held individually responsible for the quality of his work.

In Part I Mr. Simonson explodes the theories of the "idealistic" designers—those who believe that realism is the curse of the theatre; those who think over-elaborate settings are the primal sin; those who think the designer should be a prophet or a philosopher. Having disposed of these "theologians of the theatre", he proposes his own very agnostic and modest-sounding platform. The designer, Mr. Simonson thinks, is only an intermediary between the author and the audience, and a prop for weak scripts. And since authors write in so many different styles nowadays, and locate their plays in such diverse times and places, all a designer can do is interpret their intentions to the public. There is no "best setting" for any play. He reminds us that he made the Guild audience take Molnar's *Liliom* by dressing it up with a thick glamour and solid-looking walls and park-benches. He does not assert that *Liliom* calls for that kind of setting, only that the Guild audience did. Since he is one of the creators of that audience and its taste, he is probably right.

In the second part of the book Mr. Simonson attacks those who assert that the theatre has ever been free from the demand for realistic and elaborate settings. Here he displays so much learning and touches so many ideas that one could not begin to dispute with him adequately in a short review, even if one knew the field as well as he does. He very rightly points out that audiences have always demanded spectacles, the Periclean Athenians no less than the patrons of the Ziegfeld Follies. The Renaissance of course, was forever staging pageants, interludes, and tableaux, with Jove lowered by crane out of the clouds, and hell flaming with real fire. The *deus ex machina*, he triumphantly reminds us, was invented in Greece, which is supposed to be so pure and classical. And if the Elizabethans pleased the groundlings with fights, brocades, and the roar of cannon, why should Mr. Simonson be denied the right to place a tank full of real water on the stage of the Martin Beck, and surmount it with a practicable battleship, whose guns point alarmingly at the boiled shirts from West End Avenue? The prompt-copy of a Mystery staged at Mons in 1501 calls for real fruit for the trees in the earthly paradise. Could realism go farther than that? Of course the point is that the apples, though real, were richly symbolic, and Mr. Simonson knows that the Mystery, apples and all, was an expression of a faith which we have lost; whereas our apples or battleships are nothing but battleships and apples. Moreover, though it is true that the groundlings even in great periods have demanded spectacles, it does not follow that there is no difference between us and the great periods, for we have nothing but groundlings. To this Mr. Simonson would not agree, for he thinks the Guild audience sophisticated and highly educated.

The third part of *The Stage Is Set* is the best: an account of the genesis of modern scene-designing. I know no better account of the Duke of Saxe-Meiningen and Adolphe Appina. "The modern art of theatrical production . . . was completely organized . . . when the doctrines that Appina outlined and illustrated were added to the technique of rehearsal and presentation" of the Duke of Saxe-Meiningen. This is probably true, and Mr. Simonson gives us the principles of this

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"art" as learned and practised by him. This section is marred only by a verbose attack on Craig, who has already been sufficiently punctured.

Mr. Simonson's book is recommended to two types of readers: those who need an antidote to Craigian Rhetoric, and those who wish to see how a well-known New York designer works—where he gets his ideas, how he translates them comfortably into New York terms, and why, given the relation to his audience he so truculently accepts, no original work is to be expected from him.

FRANCIS FERGUSSON

DAVID GRAHAM PHILLIPS *by Isaac F. Marcosson* (DODD, MEAD. $3.00)

MR. MARCOSSON is a famous journalist, and it is perhaps fitting that he should write about the career of one of the great men of his craft. He himself has known world figures, has obtained important interviews, and has doubtless accomplished sensational "beats". Therefore he is well able to bring an authentic flavour into his accounts of Phillips as a newspaperman and as a free-lance writer. But if readers are looking for a good portrait of the man who wrote *Susan Lenox* and about whom critics have waged learned debates, they will have to seek farther.

Mr. Marcosson trips up badly in those shallows which bother all biographers—the thinly documented early days of the subject. Some finesse it with the rhetorical "One may imagine young—" or "Perhaps he was". Wiser men like W. E. Woodward admit their predicament and say "I think" or "My guess is". But Mr. Marcosson plunges in with the simple declarative sentence and what emerges is more like a protagonist of Horatio Alger than a living human being.

This sort of writing, however, carries some credibility when it is a question of Phillips's truly amazing adventures as a foreign correspondent. The account of how he scooped the British press on one of their greatest naval disasters, by means of a Turkish telegraph operator and an expatriate American doctor in the remote port of Tripoli, is extremely well done and should hold a high place in the lore of Park Row. When Phillips returned from abroad, he became one of the intimate friends and advisers of Joseph Pulitzer. The author reproduces some interesting reports which Phillips drew up for his famous boss on newspaper technique as practised by various New York dailies. It is evident that if Phillips had followed this line he would have anticipated Silas Bent by a score of years.

But while the anecdotes about the Fourth Estate are diverting, the central figure sits in an unlifelike, one dimensional position against a hackneyed photographer's screen. He does not blend with the fascinating nineties and Mr. Marcosson is no Thomas Beer to make them seem fascinating. Nor does the author do justice to the gaudy background of the next decade, the days of Theodore Roosevelt and the muckrakers—a name bestowed on Phillips by the redoubtable Teddy himself. Certainly the pages devoted to the last few years of his life when he attacked abuses in government and industry and when he wrote most of his "debunking" novels might have been better related to the atmosphere of those years.

We are told that Phillips was the "American Balzac", that he was a writer of "genius", and, what is a little closer to the truth, that his early and tragic death (by the bullet of a deranged assassin) "robbed American literature of its then greatest hope". But the only authorities cited for these statements are

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some polemical passages from Frank Harris and H. L. Mencken. Phillips was indeed an outstanding figure among American writers of the first decade of this century. But his definite place in our literature, the integrity of his revolt against his environment, his influence on his contemporaries are matters which will have to be examined by a more careful critic than Mr. Marcosson.

FRANK C. HANIGHEN

BIOGRAPHY AND THE HUMAN HEART *by Gamaliel Bradford* (HOUGHTON MIFFLIN. $3.50)

THE late Gamaliel Bradford achieved a distinctive place for himself in American letters by his studies in biography. His taste was singularly catholic: soldiers, poets, statesmen, scholars, and painters, no less than saints and charlatans of both sexes, came under his eye. It was a mixed company embracing such dissimilar types as Benedict Arnold, P. T. Barnum, Casanova, Donne, St. Francis of Assisi, Ninon de Lenclos, and Woodrow Wilson. In the present collection nine essays are brought together; three concern poets, Longfellow, Whitman, and Jones Very; one, a painter, William Morris Hunt; one, an actress, Charlotte Cushman; two, social portraitists, Horace Walpole, and John Beauchamp Jones, diarist and clerk in the Confederate Government.

Mr. Bradford's specialty was not military tactics, ethics, art, or literature, but the human mind and heart as they were discoverable through personal diaries and letters, through impressions made on their contemporaries, and through actions. He was a professed student of psychology and he invented the term "psychograph" to designate the type of study in which he became adept. His industry was tireless. Excluding the present posthumous collection he published fifteen volumes between 1912 and 1931. He delved into an enormous amount of material; weighed, sifted, and appraised it; and infallibly created the impression of knowing it thoroughly and of handling it with scrupulous accuracy. His mind seems to have been free of prejudice and preconceptions and it moved slowly, as if treading a difficult way. Sometimes he pronounced his judgements with finality but where vital testimony was conflicting he weighed it before the reader's eyes and let him, as it were, share the decision. This became a part of his technique and what he lost in verve as a result was offset by the reader's confidence in his judicial temper.

With certain limitations he belongs to the tradition of Sainte-Beuve. The Frenchman was primarily a literary critic and his psychological insight was an important part of his critical genius. Bradford, however, was, above all else, the "psychographer", and on his own admission he subordinated all other considerations to that. He recognized Sainte-Beuve's extraordinary talents and in an essay (not yet re-published) derived the "new biography" not from the French biographers of the eighteenth century, but from Sainte-Beuve. There is no doubt about Bradford's devoted study of the great French critic. Of course he fell short of him. He possessed the master's industry, sanity, and scrupulous sense of justice but lacked his incisiveness, his combination of firmness and delicacy of touch, and the *obiter* comments so profound and so revealing.

Oddly enough, Bradford's chief weakness does not lie with his sense of psychological values, which is unusually just, but with his style. His concerns are with difficult and subtle things but he expresses them in a style not merely undistinguished but verbose,

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heavy, and often awkward. He could write of the ability of poets to voice what "we can only mutter or murmur with strangled inarticulateness", and this of Charlotte Cushman's interest in money: "There was no deprecation of profit, no retiring eschewal of the imputation of active acquisitiveness". An instrument infinitely finer than this was needed.

Of the essays in *Biography and the Human Heart*, the most interesting is "An American Pepys" with its pictures of men and manners in Richmond during the Civil War, and the most successful is that on the painter, William Morris Hunt, with his eager mind, his driving ambition, his aggressive but not unattractive egotism. The least satisfying portrait is that of Walt Whitman, for while the materials are here the complete man, though laboured over with meticulous care, fails to emerge. The most valuable and suggestive essay in the volume is that from which the title is taken. New ideas of education, we are reminded, have swept the old away: we no longer know a few things well but a mass of things superficially. Worse, we are smothered beneath the weight of our own ignorance. The way out, the key to an understanding of life, is the individual, and the individual is most directly, broadly, and interestingly revealed in biography. Says Bradford in conclusion: "The supreme value of this educational use of biography is for the conduct of our lives". In that sentence he justifies, for himself and for us, the type of literature to which he devoted his talents.

JOSEPH J. REILLY

THE WIFE OF ROSSETTI *by Violet Hunt* (DUTTON. $4.00)

ELIZABETH ELEANOR SIDDALL, the wife of Dante Gabriel Rossetti, died of an overdose of laudanum at the age of twenty-nine. The reticence and loyalty of Rossetti's friends and family have combined to make a mystery of her and her death until now, when Violet Hunt, who grew up hearing all the gossip of Pre-Raphaelite tea-tables, has engaged to explain to us the poor, ill-fated, beautiful creature. Miss Hunt has been willing, nay, anxious, to tell what she knows; it is no fault of hers that "the Sid", after we have read *The Wife of Rossetti*, is a mystery still.

That she began as Rossetti's model we all knew. With her long lines, her full throat, her straight nose and heavy hair, she was the perfect model for a Pre-Raphaelite painter (although how those admirers of the primitives ever came to choose the great Greek women they painted—and married—is beyond understanding), and she ended, weary years later, as his wife. She was a bundle of inconsistencies: a milliner's helper, she had claims to good blood; half-literate, she wrote some not entirely contemptible poetry; she drew and painted well enough to become Ruskin's protégée. Miss Hunt alleges that she is defending as well as explaining her heroine, but God save us all from such defence! A more fascinating book than this one would be hard to find, with its gossip, its anecdotes, its old photographs and documents; but the service it does Elizabeth Siddall's character is very dubious. The author has a great deal to say about Christina Rossetti's treatment of her brother's wife, but Miss Hunt herself turns again and again wearisomely to the point that poor Lizzy was "not quite the lady", that her sickness and languors and difficult temper came from the fact that she was not at ease in Zion, till at last one quite loses patience with this snobbery toward a woman dead these seventy years.

Rossetti felt she was not good enough for him, that is plain enough. He changed the

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spelling of her name to Siddal to make it more impressive, he put off marrying her until her genius and her beauty had made her as famous as he was himself, and until she was sick from hope deferred. It seems obvious enough that if Miss Siddall lacked self-confidence it was not entirely because she had come from poor people and had been a working-girl in her youth. The miracle is, not that she took the fatal overdose of laudanum, but that she resisted the temptation so long.

Miss Hunt is so careless with her relative pronouns, among other things, that it would be a brave soul who would quote her as an authority. Just who did what to whom is never really brilliantly clear throughout the book. Yet the sidelights that are thrown on the Pre-Raphaelite Brethren are very illuminating; the brethren are at once touching and funny, with their earnest anti-Bohemianism and their walks at night to find and exhort and redeem London's prostitutes. Echoes from a more earnest time reach us from every page. There is one footnote, on page 230, which alone would be worth the price of the book. A patron of the Brethren, a certain Nonconformist Mr. Plint, is writing to Rossetti about a picture which he has commissioned: "My dear Sir," he says, "Could you introduce [into the picture] *both* Carlyle and Kingsley, and change one of the four *fashionable* young ladies into a *quiet, earnest holy*-looking one, with a book or two, and tracts?" The italics are Mr. Plint's, but the glee is for all of us.

FREDERIC SHEPARD

THE IRONIC TEMPER *by Haakon M. Chevalier* (OXFORD. $3.50)

ANATOLE FRANCE never quite came to grips with the problems of life. His irony was his mode of escape from the responsibilities that confront ordinary men. It prevented him from achieving an altogether satisfying synthesis. Indeed, in spite of the beauty and freshness of the stream of prose that continued for fifty years to flow from his busy pen, there is evident in his works a philosophy that is incomplete, tentative, and progressively monotonous.

Mr. Chevalier believes that the critics have evolved no probable explanation of the fact of this defective philosophy. He himself thinks that it can be accounted for only by an emphasis on the ironic quality of the artist's temperament. Such a mental quality may often be no more than a transitory phase in an individual's development, but in the case of the great Parisian *maître* it was a permanent attitude which conditioned all that he said or did or wrote. Irony was the pattern of Anatole France's response to experience, the appropriate mode of his artistic expression. It was at once his originality, his special virtue, his peculiar vice, his unique power, his baffling insufficiency, his intriguing lack of final integration. In a word, irony was Anatole France himself.

The argument opens with a rejection of every merely objective conception of the artist's life and work. Anatole France is seen as a subjectivist, as a man who presents the essential forms of a life lived from the inside. In the universe it is himself he seeks. In his works it is himself he portrays. The world he reveals is the ironist's world, a subjective realm where all values have undergone distortion. By reason of his irony, he fails to harmonize with objective reality. Mr. Chevalier drives this point home vigorously by means of a profuse illustration from France's work. Only thus, he thinks, is it possible to approach the paradox that was Anatole France, the wilful and conscious contradictions, the disillusionment which loved illu-

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sions, the search after truth and the appetite for fiction or fancy, the scepticism which longed for the unquestioning beliefs of a little child. Indeed Anatole France was nothing more or less than a child, with a child's charm and a child's irresponsibility.

Thus we reach the conclusion that France was a Peter Pan, which is exactly what some critics say of George Bernard Shaw. Whether or not this is the final verdict on the matter, Mr. Chevalier can certainly lay one very flattering unction to his soul: he has given us, in this book, a delightful essay on the ironic temper, that quality of mind which the great Parisian ironist himself asserted to be the last phase of disillusion.

CHAS. F. RONAYNE

MUTINY ON THE BOUNTY *by Charles Nordhoff and James Norman Hall* (LITTLE, BROWN. $2.50)

"SAVING the light, fluffy 'fair-weather clouds' just above the vast ring of the horizon which encircled us, the sky was clear. The stars paled gradually; as the rosy light grew stronger, the velvet of the heavens faded and turned blue. Then the sun, still below the horizon, began to tint the little clouds in the east with every shade of mother-of-pearl."

If there are obnoxious features to the conventional adventure story one of them certainly is the violently emotional attitude their authors seem obliged to assume when confronted with such matters as sunrises, sunsets, storms, and full moons. It would, of course, be pointless and even absurd to omit these ancient and highly regarded natural phenomena from an adventure story but it is a distinctly pleasant experience to find them treated with the restraint and decency of the foregoing example picked at random from *Mutiny on the Bounty*. For, though Conrad have his devotees to adventure in the ambience of exotic colours and half-spoken words, there are still many of us who cherish the old forthright manner and who, to the tinted and frothed concoction, prefer the rum of our adventure straight. It is in this straightforward, workman-like English manner that Messrs. Nordhoff and Hall have told the tale of the Bounty Mutiny.

It actually happened. *H. M. S. Bounty,* commanded by Lieutenant William Bligh, set sail from Spithead December 23, 1787, for Tahiti to get bread-fruit trees for transplantation in the West Indies. On it as midshipman sailed Roger Bryam, who collected the first dictionary and drew up the first grammar of the Tahitian language. The mutiny occurred shortly after the *Bounty* started home from Tahiti, and it was occasioned as much by Bligh's insulting attitude toward the officers as by his procedure of feeding the men rotten food, the while he impounded the provisions and gifts they had received from their Tahitian friends to his own personal gain. The mutineers cast Bligh and those who remained faithful to him adrift in the ship's launch. The boat was loaded to the gunwales and some, young Bryam among them, who would have followed the ousted commander were forced to remain aboard. These with a few of the mutineers proper were set off at Tahiti and the rest sailed away to hide on an uncharted island. That Bligh got his launch to Timur, some two thousand miles away from where he was cast adrift, remains an almost unrivalled feat of navigation. Once back in England he set working the system of justice which narrowly escaped destroying the innocent hero of this story, Roger Bryam.

The book has a nice regard for the peculiarities of uncorrupted Tahitian life, and the reconstruction of the voyage and mutiny,

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while imaginative and full-bodied, is easily credible. Altogether, *Mutiny on the Bounty* is an exceptional adventure story, one we may read with pleasure. It is, incidentally, the Book of the Month Club selection for October.

JOHN BRONSON

DAVID HUME *by J. Y. T. Greig* (OXFORD. $3.75)

"THIS is the biography of a man. Its aim is not to criticize or even to expound his philosophical opinions."

Not every philosopher lends himself to a purposively partial study. But David Hume was a citizen of the world, a restless social animal, and a man of affairs whose life was far from being the application of his own philosophy. His mental temper was sceptical, his heart generous and abounding in mercy and credulity. His philosophical and other writings were pursued leisurely and unassumingly. He wrote most fruitfully before the completion of his thirtieth year, and knocked off literary work (with minor exceptions) fifteen years before his death, the almost holy composure of which must have mortified the good people of Edinburgh.

While it is impossible, in this brief compass, to do full justice to Mr. Greig's book, it is easy to justify it. The twentieth century needs to be reminded of Hume. Excepting Berkeley, the Irishman, this Scotsman is the foremost name among those using the English language for their philosophical speculalations. Historically, of course, he far excels Berkeley, for later English philosophy is merely an elaborate adherence to or dissent from his ideas. The quality of his scepticism, with all its crudities, is of similar essence to the scepticism of the present age.

While Mr. Greig has emphasized the ephemera of Hume's career, he never forgets his mental complexion or his substance. His impact on the leading minds of his day is registered faithfully and in sufficient detail, and the account of his quarrel with Rousseau is the clearest, if not the fairest, I have read. It is one of several instances of insularity which are annoying only because they occur in a book of such uniform excellence. Hume's relationship with the Comtesse de Boufflers receives full (though not emphatic) treatment, and there is something very refreshing in the author's admission that the character of the friendship baffles him.

There is no valid reason why this new life of Hume shouldn't supersede Burton's, which is long, prolix, and smug. It was difficult to be fair to an unregenerate materialist in 1846, and Burton hypocritically soft-pedaled Hume's scepticism until it became less a fundamental than a charming foible. He was equally careful to slight the philosopher's violent Toryism and sensual excursions. Hume's present biographer, who obviously admits humanity as a sufficient reason for the reconciliation of such disparate qualities and attributes, leaves a splendid, all-dimensional portrait of the great materialist.

"One might say", epitomizes Mr. Greig, "that two David Humes inhabited the same body. One, the main personality, composed the *Treatise*, the *Political Discourses* and the *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*; befriended Thomas Blacklock; adopted Jean-Jacques; loved Adam Smith; encouraged Gibbon; and desired the Colonists to be allowed to go their own way. The other David Hume, who querulously raged against the English Whigs and John Wilkes, formed a partially dissociated personality, the product of his early struggles to escape from Christian superstitioners and Calvinist 'enthusiasts'."

WALLACE BROCKWAY

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SEVEN NOVELS OF THE MONTH

If we are to believe all we read, this country has just got its first proletarian novel. Its title is Nobody Starves (*Longmans, Green. $2.50*) and its author, Catharine Brody, is said to have gone to work as a mill-hand to get the material for it.

Miss Brody does not openly wave a red flag in the book. She simply tells the story of an inarticulate young couple of the working-class, Molly and Bill; if she intended more the artist in her defeated the propagandist, for if anything becomes plain as the book is read it is that Molly and Bill were the victims of their individual temperaments and not of their station in life. This remains true although Miss Brody, driven perhaps by the feeling that her story was not quite pointed or dramatic enough, finishes it off by having Bill murder Molly when they are threatened by starvation—a conclusion so forced and unlikely that the novel is nearly ruined by it. She has, before this, put Molly in such a pass—her own job gone, pregnant, her husband out of work, their friends unable to offer assistance—that the real tragedy would be to leave Molly alive. She would then have haunted the uneasy reader as she ought, instead of lying still and fortunate after her brief, pointless life.

Nobody Starves is better than a good book, although it is far from a work of art. Miss Brody does succeed to an uncanny degree in being the spokesman of these inarticulate young people, and even in suggesting that they are victims of a class system. Although Molly would have been Molly on Park Avenue just as much as she is in a "company town", her aimlessness and her extravagance seem the result, while one is under Miss Brody's spell, of financial insecurity. One understands that since there is no chance that what savings she and her husband can put by from their meagre salary will ever bring even moderate ease there is no reason why she should not get what fun she can from buying the unsuitable dress, the sleazy bright piece of underwear; the movies make life glamorous for an hour, while fifty cents in the savings bank would only go to the instalment-collector in the end. It is by piling up such facts as these, and by recording the states of mind which seem for the moment typical of a class, such as the resentment felt toward the loafer who eats and takes up house-room while contributing nothing to the common expenses, that Miss Brody and her admirers have been deceived into thinking her a "proletarian" novelist. But the choice between the immediate movies and the instalment-collector of the future has its parallel on every level; and the waster who will not carry his own weight is no great favourite anywhere. It is, ironically, the universality of the types Miss Brody is writing about, not their significance as members of the masses, that makes the book valuable.

This is not to say that one can come from reading *Nobody Starves* complacent or indifferent to the industrial quagmire in which Miss Brody's characters are caught, but simply that if the intention was to show that Bill and Molly were ruined by the evils of present-day capitalism she would have done better to present us with characters whose

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lives, cast in pleasanter places, might have flowered richly, instead of this aimless girl, this sulky boy, whose defects as Miss Brody presents them are part of their fibre.

The point would not be worth labouring if the book had not been hailed as a significant social document. Miss Brody will undoubtedly write other books, and the praise she has had for this one may incline her to feel that she has found her best scene. She is too good a writer to fall into the Zola-and-water tradition, to go on setting down such sentences as "The sun was now laid thin over grey like a scraping of yellow butter over a crust of bread fished from an ash-barrel" under the delusion that she is providing "atmosphere". But since many of our socio-literary prophets felt that an epic of the depression was due, Miss Brody's story of the depression was hailed as an epic; and since any story of inarticulate people in an unhappy situation is invariably over-praised in this country, *Nobody Starves* has been over-praised. So we shall probably lose a good author, and must get what comfort we can from the incidental excellences of a series of books of special pleading.

On the other side of the Atlantic from Catharine Brody and much farther away, really, than that, Sylvia Townsend Warner goes on writing her stories and short novels. One turns away from the dust and heat of "depression America" to The Salutation (*Viking. $2.50*)—a group of fifteen stories, of which two are long enough to be miniature novels—grateful for the contrast they provide. Is anyone today writing English with more distinction than Miss Warner? Was ever form better fitted to content than in her stories? Can even Powys turn his esoteric tricks more neatly? But reading further the coolness is a little disquieting; it has something of the chill of the crypt about it. Blood and sweat can grow oppressive, but the veins of Miss Warner's creatures run ice-water. Her humour is a changeling's humour; she jeers at mortals. She will come no closer than dreams come to the life of everyday.

Here is Elinor Barley, a murderess, quaint as Defoe's Mrs. Veale; Mr. Lubin, who died trying to thread his way through a maze; a Princess in search of her kitten; Minnie Parr, who makes beds in a house of assignation; Emily Brontë taken for a ghost by a blind parishioner. Here is a whole concourse, in short, of creatures that you will not see the like of under any sun, who have so little of our common clay about them that we cannot reprehend their crimes or rejoice in their triumphs. The result is that one reads Miss Warner's stories almost as aloofly as she has written them—approving her as a craftsman, enjoying the bouquet of her style, wondering to find a writer who has strayed off by herself into a sort of Silver Age of the Augustans, an English Apuleius full of stories of witchcraft and moonlight, of talking animals and elaborate "conceits". One story, *The Salutation,* which gives its title to the book, written on a long-drawn-out nostalgic note, hints at what she might be like if she were mortal. For my part, once I have ceased to look for humanity in her, I would rather have her as she is. Realistic writers come two a penny nowadays, but there are only a handful who can turn a quaint and mannered story.

If ever there was a born novelist, Margaret Kennedy is. She can write you a book about anything or nothing, and get all there is to be got out of every situation. The heroine of A Long Time Ago (*Doubleday, Doran. $2.00*) is a woman so simple that

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at the end of the story her own middle-aged daughter is not quite sure that she isn't a fool, but she is so lovable, so good, so consistent, and so funny that she is worth a gross of scintillating beauties.

When the book opens Ellen Napier has been seven years a widow; busy, good and kindly, she is living in an empty world. Just as she was for thirty years Richard Napier's wife, she is, at the end of her life, his widow; her adoring love goes on every hour. Her daughter, thirty-six, "modern", restless, has just discovered that her father, "a long time ago", was unfaithful; by the time she learns it it is an open secret, for his inamorata was a great singer, Elissa Koebel, and she has just published the story of her life, taking infinite care to see that her lovers, whose idiosyncrasies she sets down at great length, are entirely identifiable. Hope, the daughter, is appalled. Her whole conception of her father and of her parents' marriage must be altered if Elissa Koebel is telling the truth. She approaches an uncle for help; he sidles away from her, and by herself she has to return and recapture what remains in her memory of a summer in Ireland twenty-five years before. Was Ellen a gullible fool, or did she conspire at her own deceit? That is the problem Miss Kennedy sets for her reader.

A Long Time Ago is another of Miss Kennedy's grand family-stories. It was because Louise, rather stodgily married to an Oxford Don, wanted a background to be picturesque against that the family and their husbands and wives pooled their resources and rented a castle in Ireland. Louise wanted to live like a heroine in a Russian novel, as her brother realized, but she got a great deal more Russian atmosphere than she bargained for. Overjoyed at first to have a great singer, even though a *grande amoureuse* as well, for a neighbour, Louise took to hating Elissa heartily when Dick fell captive to her. In the back of her mind Louise had been meditating a flirtation with her personable brother-in-law, with a little mooning anguish and high-minded renunciation as the climax. It was not in the stars at all that Dick should have a real love affair under her roof. Dick, morbidly tired, a little restive with the cool and saintly Ellen, made an intractable hero for the managing lady; but hardest of all to stand in a difficult summer was Ellen's invulnerability. She was contemptuous at the idea that her husband, whom she loved, could be unfaithful. And so complete and unruffled was her certainty that after twenty-five years of family knowledge, and in possession of documents galore, Ellen's daughter is not quite sure that her mother isn't right.

There may be funnier parodies extant than Miss Kennedy's imitation of "the story-of-my-life" as written by a spoiled public favourite, but at the moment I cannot remember one. Isadora Duncan's worshippers will undoubtedly assassinate Miss Kennedy for this chapter from Elissa Koebel's memoirs, but I am praying that she may be spared long enough to base a novel on the after-the-fact books about D. H. Lawrence.

For those who like nonsense to the *n*th power there is Evelyn Waugh's Black Mischief (*Farrar & Rinehart. $2.50*). Seth, Emperor of Azania, a flea-bitten African island, engages a wastrel friend of his Oxford days as Minister of Modernization in the calm between two insurrections, and sets out to bring his Empire up-to-date. The book is considerably too extravagant to be good satire, but it is funny more often than not, and the scene in which Basil Seal discovers that he has just been dining off his sweetheart out-Candides *Candide*. Mr. Waugh's bright-

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ness is a little too unremitting for my taste, but I find it quite comprehensible that he has a corps of fanatic admirers.

V. Sackville-West continues, in Family History (*Doubleday, Doran. $2.50*), her studies of English society. The novel is by no means so formidable as this makes it sound; it is, on the contrary, an excellently constructed and very moving story of the relation between two incompatible lovers. But Evelyn Jarrold, the heroine, is more than a woman fifteen years older than the man she loves. She was drawn from, and used to typify, the "new" aristocracy as contrasted with the real aristocracy of England. Elegant, idle, fearful of appearances, her virtues and failings are both those of the bourgeoisie; she embodies a kind of Edwardian servant-girl's dream of an aristocrat.

Evelyn was lifted from a straitened girlhood into affluent idleness by marriage with the eldest son of a self-made family. Conscious of her obligation to them, conscientious to the core, long after her husband's death Evelyn lives her entire life according to the pattern that the Jarrolds admire, existing as daughter-in-law of the rising family and mother of its heir (for old Jarrold is at last knighted) rather than as a woman in her own right. According to the limited and sometimes fantastic ideals of the Jarrolds, gentlefolk dress well, keep servants at arm's length, hunt, and quote the Latin classics. Their fondness for things of the mind stops with quotation; Latin is a sort of fraternity password to prove that education was not beyond them, either mentally or financially.

On the verge of forty, after years of virtuous and untempted widowhood, Evelyn falls in love with young Miles Vane-Merrick. A member of the true "territorial aristocracy", every idea and habit he has is anathema to the Jarrolds. His castle is crumbling, he is shabby, he hardly notices inept service and is on terms of familiarity with his servants; he is interested in Labour, he fights as valiantly to get a hearing for new ideas as the Jarrolds do to suppress them. That he is fifteen years younger than Evelyn is no great factor in their tragedy. His willingness to marry her or his desire to make no secret of their love are alike incomprehensible to her. Their conflicting ideas of *noblesse oblige* (both, one may parenthetically say, rather fantastically romantic to an American reader) meet in a deadlock. Poor Evelyn withdraws, unable to handle the one relation in which she has ever found personal happiness, falls ill, and acquiescently dies. Her son, young Dan, grandson of the newly-rich Jarrolds and the bourgeois Wilsons, emerges as a member by sympathy of the class to which Evelyn's lover belongs by birth.

Old readers of Miss Sackville-West do not need to be told that simply as entertainment the book has very few equals among the season's publications. Her characters are warm and vivid, her situations well handled. She has still one or two weaknesses which confound her admirers: labouring of the obvious is one, but by far the most disturbing is an out-cropping preciosity which seems out of keeping with her frankness and admirable sense. It was fair enough to call the first section of the book "Portrait of the Jarrolds" and the second "Portrait of Miles Vane-Merrick", since that is precisely what they are; but to call the third "Portrait of Lesley Anquetil" when Lesley Anquetil is very lightly sketched and hardly concerns the story except as a secondary character in mild contrast to Evelyn, was, it seems to me, a sad error, and to call the last section of the book "Obituary Notice of Evelyn Jarrold" a mis-

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take in judgement which amounts very nearly to a mistake in taste. It reminds one warm admirer of Miss Sackville-West's writing that the author of *Gottfried Künstler* could also write, and issue between the same covers, a tale at once so obvious and mannered as *Pomodoro*.

ALTHOUGH THE NARROW CORNER (*Doubleday, Doran. $2.50*) is not, as the publishers assure you, any second *The Moon and Sixpence*, it is a very good book in Somerset Maugham's usual vein. This time it is an English physician who is exiled East of Suez, and before his indifferent but kindly eyes that the tragedy of a callow boy, a thoroughly good man, and a beautiful child of nature takes place. Dr. Saunders makes an excellent *raisonneur*: detached by his nature, and by the fact that he has drifted into opium-smoking, there is no danger that he will pry the dramatic situation open prematurely, or act to defeat the fate that overtakes his comrades. *The Narrow Corner* is recommended to all who like the exotic, fatalistic, more than slightly misogynistic Maugham novel.

THERE is every chance that fifty readers will take up Zelda Fitzgerald's first novel, SAVE ME THE WALTZ (*Scribner's. $2.00*), and drop it again within the first chapter to every one reader who will persist to the end. It is not only that her publishers have not seen fit to curb an almost ludicrous lushness of writing ("Incubated in the mystic pungence of Negro mammies, the family hatched into girls" will do for an example) but they have not given the book the elementary services of a literate proofreader. We read that Alabama's older sister had "The DeCameron" in her drawer, and had bought a copy of the "Primaverra"; Alabama herself had read "Cabel" (James Branch, in case it isn't clear), wanted to dance in a "Marseille" dance-hall, and liked the music of "Prokopieff"; while the favourite composer of a comrade at dancing school was "Litz". In fact the number of absurd errors in the book are beyond counting; and yet if one can persist past the mistakes and the verbiage one comes on an earnest, honest, good little story of a girl trying desperately to make a character for herself which will carry her through life; and one will find, as well, that in Judge Austin Beggs Mrs. Fitzgerald has drawn with loving care as fine a man as we have had in fiction for many a month. He is the father of the heroine, and, rightly admiring his integrity, Alabama strains every nerve to find a way to live as stoically and admirably as he.

There is a warm, intelligent, undisciplined mind behind *Save Me the Waltz*. Mrs. Fitzgerald should have had what help she needed to save her book from the danger of becoming a laughing-stock.

DOROTHEA BRANDE

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KEEPING UP WITH THE NOVELISTS

LIGHT IN AUGUST *by William Faulkner* (SMITH & HAAS. $2.50)

REALISM, it has been said, is romanticism going on all fours, and at times the debased posture has been a rather effective disguise. The realist declared he conformed with the Aristotelian rule of the probable and as proof pointed to the fact that his characters were such people as we might meet again and again in the milieu he depicted—and this milieu, he usually said, was no small part of the existent world. Of late the realist has turned to more exotic scenes, but he still claims that he treats his characters "realistically", and if he were called on to name novelists at the opposite pole to himself, he would doubtless mention "Monk" Lewis, Eugène Sue, Victor Hugo, and Bulwer-Lytton. William Faulkner, we presume, lays claim to the title of realist (if he does not, then his rapine, insanity, mutilation, et cetera stamp him as a special sort of pornographer), yet his latest novel, in common with his earlier ones, is reminiscent of nothing so much as the work of the Gothic writers in England, the men of the forties in France, and the fiery-eyed poets of the *Sturm und Drang*. Mr. Faulkner is a thorough romantic; it is evident in his love of violence for its own sake and the pretentiousness with which he loads almost every paragraph. It is likely that no one can now read with anything like pleasure the men to whom Mr. Faulkner has just been compared: though romanticism is always the same old tart, she preserves an appearance of freshness by wearing the fashions of the moment—indeed she has a genius for the fashionable—and no one will have her in the garments of yesteryear. There are no howling spectres or ruined castles or young men offering homage to Satan by playing on alcoholic mouth-organs in *Light in August*, but there are figures every bit as fantastic, which, because they can be called "indigenous" to the "decaying South", are acceptable to the current taste.

Among these figures there is Lena Grove, pregnant in the earth earthy manner, "quiet, dogged", "grave, quiet", "quiet, tranquil, stubborn", who "sits quite still, hearing and feeling the implacable and immemorial earth, but without fear or alarm". There is Joe Christmas, a murderer and possibly a mulatto, who "carried with him his own inescapable warning, like a flower its scent or a rattlesnake its rattle", and the second phase of whose relationship with a middle-aged white woman "was as though he had fallen into a sewer". There is the Scotch foster-father of Christmas, who spends an entire Sunday whipping Joe, "methodically, with slow and deliberate force . . . without heat or anger", in an attempt to make him memorize the Presbyterian catechism. Joe's white mistress is a Yankee dwelling alone in the South in a great decayed house, ministering to the Negroes, and with a family history too long and too romantic to relate here. There is Byron Bunch, the second lover of Lena Grove, who remains at work after everyone has gone from the mill Saturday afternoons and in the evening "rides thirty miles into the country and spends Sunday

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leading the choir in a country church—a service which lasts all day long". There is the Reverend Hightower who, in his early days, talked in the pulpit, "using religion as though it were a dream. Not a nightmare but something which went faster than the words in the Book; a sort of cyclone that did not even need to touch the actual earth". Since his wife jumped or fell from the window of a hotel room in Memphis where she had gone with a drunken man and the Reverend Hightower was expelled from his church, his sermons having grown yet wilder, he has lived alone on a side-street. The list could be continued: none of the many characters is less strange and all the main ones are provided with curious genealogies.

When Mr. Faulkner does not portray violence of action, he turns to violence of feeling, and this violence is not only present in such emotions as love and hate but also in what for a more restrained writer would be commonplace observation or transitory feeling. Here are two examples, and in neither of them is Mr. Faulkner at his most purple:

> It is as though, for all her frozen and mechanically moved inertia, she had come for some definite purpose or at least with some vague hope. But he sees at once that the man is in something like a coma, as though oblivious and utterly indifferent to his whereabouts, and yet withal a quality latent and explosive, paradoxically rapt and alert at the same time.
>
> Above the blunt, cold rake of the automatic his face had that serene, unearthly luminousness of angels in church windows.

The only departures from this pitch are when Mr. Faulkner is indulging in a nice aptitude for bucolic humour. This terrific intensity, in which all the senses and feelings are heightened as they are said to be under the influence of marijuana, does not give a true or "realistic" picture of the world. The picture that it does give is an entirely romantic one, replete with *frissons* for both the senses and the emotions, and all overshadowed with vague indications of some deep meaning. The romantic yearning for infinity has often been noted; its particular form in *Light in August* is this elusive shadow of meaning. The consequence of its almost invariable presence is that the book seems at times like an epileptic fit, a fierce straining against nothing; at other times, trivial things are weighted with a portentousness which a moment's reflection should make as laughable as the teeth-grinding of a hero in a melodrama. Here is pure romantic emotion, almost without any attempt to make the object commensurate with what is felt—a thing unknown to Sue, for instance, when he placed a network of Jesuits all over Europe to make us shiver in our boots. Insane and overwrought persons doubtless suffer from this constant hyperaesthesia, but Mr. Faulkner also endows the simple Lena Grove with it—and if we are mistaking for the experiences of Lena passages where the author is speaking in his own person, the criticism is only underscored.

Light in August is written in varied forms: characters are approached from a number of angles, there are throw-backs, much of the story is placed in the mouths of characters (which entails some repetition), and the final chapter is narrated by a person who appears there for the first time. That this complexity contributes to the story's power of engaging our attention is true, yet the plot might be compared to a Victorian bracket which is elaborated far beyond its needs to function efficiently as a bracket. And—it may be said at the risk of seeming to force a thesis on the book—one more indication of Mr. Faulkner's true affinities is to be found in the recollection of the tortuous construc-

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tion of any book by Hugo or Sue. It follows, then, despite Mr. Faulkner's great gifts and deep sensitivity, what he is actually offering us is a flight from reality. His horrors and obscenities in no way contradict this, for many persons, tired of ordinary life, have been known to seek amusement courting nightmares.

GEOFFREY STONE

PETER ASHLEY *by DuBose Heyward* (FARRAR & RINEHART. $2.50)

TURNING away from more or less contemporary Charleston and its picturesque coloured people, subjects by which he has been known in the past, Mr. Heyward attempts an historical novel, using the Charleston of 1861 for his setting. He takes for his hero a young aristocrat who has just returned from his final year at Oxford. This Peter Ashley, ready to begin a literary career, has already started thinking for himself. It becomes his expressed opinion that the South will be fighting against overwhelming odds, that slavery cannot survive in a "civilized democracy", that Southern cotton will not prove to be an invincible weapon, and that England will remain neutral. Such ideas, perhaps to be expected of one educated in England, are nevertheless foreign to the point of outlandishness in the Charleston which has already seen the wild celebration which followed the signing of the Ordinance of Secession on December 20, 1860.

The story hinges on the conflict in Peter's mind and heart. He sees the prospect with his disillusioned uncle, Pierre Chardon, and hesitates long before joining a war which seems so ill-conceived. But against his understanding is arrayed the whole suggestive power of a community and, more than that, the desire to stand side by side with family and friends. This conflict is of particular benefit in its clear statement of the dissident individual's problem when his country goes to war. Neither fear nor the mind's truth conquers. The answer is one which is not infrequent, nor is it ignoble. They all go bravely, flaunting the pennons of their illusions, carrying with them the peculiar and unique glory of Charleston, of the Sea Islands, of the plantation estates.

The author does his best work in describing the city and the life and spirit and customs of the people. The Race Week which superseded war for seven days, the polite, gentlemanly and bloodless engagement with Major Anderson of Fort Sumter, the duel, the slave mart, all these are handled with masterly detail. Charleston stands forth resplendent up to the final day upon which the companies go north. Only six months have elapsed during which the story has been told, this prelude to the Civil War, this valedictory to Charleston.

In characterization and in his feeling for the individual Mr. Heyward offers little cause for enthusiasm. He traces an extremely accurate type rather than creates an individual. The love story he tells seems rather perfunctory. But there are many stories filled with love and only one Charleston, and this book is that city's own.

ARCHER WINSTEN

INCHIN' ALONG *by Welbourn Kelley* (MORROW. $2.50)

IT IS a rare thing that a story dealing with whites and Negroes in the south does not also reveal the colour of the author's skin. This one does not. Mr. Kelley might be either a white man possessed of rare sympathy for a downtrodden race or a coloured man who prefers to understand what he

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might justly hate. The result is a book of great documentary value, with sufficient consistency of interests to justify it as art.

The story itself is little more than a sermon attempting to prove that virtue may be rewarded if a Negro has Job's patience, God's assistance, and Paul Bunyan's energy. Otherwise he will remain a sharecropper on a white man's land. He will do all the work and give a certain percentage of the crop to his landlord in payment of rent and supplies. The landlord will see to it, being in possession of the accounts, that his tenant gets into debt and stays there. For the landlord wishes to keep him if he is a good worker, and if he is in debt the law will assure his continued presence. Attempting to gain justice, the Negro automatically becomes a "bad nigger" and a menace to the community. There is a traditional way of treating black menaces.

But Mr. Kelley does not intend his hero for defeat. Dink Britt at the opening of the story has slaved ten years to save enough money to buy his own farm. Having bought the farm, he marries a beautiful light-skinned girl who is attractive to white men. Thereafter every form of racial tribulation is visited upon his long-suffering head. His wife's first child is Cap'm Lawson's. Her blindness follows an attempted abortion. He is present while his best friend, innocent of wrong-doing, is burned to death by a white mob. Through it all, nevertheless, he is meek and respectful to white folk. He keeps on working hard and buying more land whenever he can. By this process of "inchin' along" he eventually becomes a rich farmer.

As a general picture of Negro difficulties in the south this book is overdrawn, just as it also overdoes the incredible capability and good fortune of Dink Britt. But its substance carries too much truth of character and circumstance, its indictment is bulwarked with too close an adherence to known facts, for its defects to matter much. When characters live, as these do, questions of propaganda and its propriety are easily forgotten.

ARCHER WINSTEN

TO MAKE MY BREAD *by Grace Lumpkin* (MACAULAY. $2.00)

TUCKED into this book will be found the current solution to a social problem, yet those persons ready to shrug at the mere mention of "sociological novel" may read without irritation. The characters' lives, detailed enough to leave a cumulative impression, unfold with so little discernible direction from their author that only the suspicious will be able to see which thread leads to the knot that finishes off the pattern.

A fierce storm during which a child is born and live stock freeze to the mountainside melodramatically opens the book; after that we quietly live the simple days and nights of Southern hill folk. Emma's four children (survivors of seven) aren't dreary, although they sometimes go hungry and always have chores. One son, "ambitious", leaves to study for the ministry; a second is killed in a brawl over the woman he loves. Emma's father (her husband is dead) works the McClures' small property to raise corn. To supplement their scanty resources he becomes an agent for a neighbouring bootlegger. A harsh existence, but neither the author nor the characters sentimentalize over it.

Then for a year the law takes the grandfather away from his dependents. When he returns he finds the farm sold to a lumber company "from outside". To make their bread the McClures go down to the mill. Emma sees the town trees producing money, her son and daughter (John and Bonnie) at school, and all of them in a home with win-

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dows and water. Her visions—and ours—fade slowly. Bonnie and John attend school for a while, but then their small earning power must be called upon. They are more intelligent and more aggressive than their immediate neighbours; as they grow older, marry, and have children of their own they question the Power that gives to a few so much more than they can use and to a great many so much less than they actually need. Eventually Emma dies of pellagra ("a poor man's disease"); John, after a short period when he seems headed for the side of the "higher-ups" against his own people, organizes a union; and Bonnie is killed in a strike. John appears at Bonnie's funeral with a red band on his arm. "'I was feeling', John said, 'as if everything was finished'.—'No,' John Stevens [his Master] said, 'This is just the beginning.'" Communism. Salvation.

A synopsis necessarily skips a good deal: the humour of some of the mountain talk; the McClures' abortive attempt to buy a cotton farm on the instalment plan; Grandfather on a Civil War Jubilee;—the persistent and brave struggle put forth by the family to make their bread.

"Fielding Burke", in a beautifully lyric book, has argued that the hill people should stick to their farms. Erskine Caldwell, in *Tobacco Road*, points with cruel comedy to the deterioration that may be expected from those who stupidly cling to their farms instead of leaving for the mills. Following the fortunes of Grace Lumpkin's characters we see their plight without the distortion of either lyricism or "realism" whether or not we agree with the implied solution. Not as talented a writer as Mr. Caldwell or "Fielding Burke", Grace Lumpkin has given us a better book: an honest, sincere picture, well set and well developed.

CYRILLY ABELS

THE INFINITE LONGING *by Marie Verhoeven Schmitz* (HARCOURT, BRACE. $2.00)

IT IS easy to understand why *The Infinite Longing* should have been translated into two languages since its publication in Holland in 1929. Adam Heemdrift, the main character, might well be the prototype of many contemporary financiers in any country. More than that, his loneliness, though of a different *genre*, is as tragic as Tonio Kröger's, and his egotism, though more crushing, is as human as Swann's. Furthermore, his abandonment of his one devastating desire for power (which he believes is to bring happiness) and his spiritual growth toward a comparative selflessness is compellingly told.

The intensity of Mrs. Schmitz's main character carries over into her style. Her prose (and here credit must be given her translator) has the masculine quality of Sigrid Undset's, though it lacks the variety and grace. It has, too, especially towards the end of this book, a tendency towards a moralistic sentimentality that is never found in the Norwegian writer.

This tendency is implicit in the very title. Heemdrift's longing is infinite and perpetual, almost *ad nauseam*; there is too great a concentration on one type of emotion. Fortunately, however, his desire is not usually nostalgic; it is power he wants, power over his business associates and over the numerous women who are invariably taken in by his egotism and strength. But from the very start we are aware that this Hercules will some day bear his burden. And in the last two sections, where the author's skill suddenly slackens, we are told too obviously what she had implied before; indeed towards the end there is so little subtlety that Heemdrift's fall seems a bit too true to type, and

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the final episode with the prostitute anticlimactic and trite. Nevertheless, the tenor of the book is essentially fine, and renders *The Infinite Longing* moving and often profound.

VIVIAN O. WEINER

SKERRETT *by Liam O'Flaherty* (LONG & SMITH. $2.50)

THE island of Nara is off the coast of Ireland, dismal, rocky, unproductive, cut off from the mainland by storms, where the struggle to live is appalling and the uncertainty both of the means of existence and of the very weather whip the minds of the inhabitants into a perpetual anxiety. Such an environment does not foster gentleness or help generate human warmth.

David Skerrett, the principal character in Liam O'Flaherty's new novel, arrives with his wife on this island. Essentially a sort of Colossus, attempting to bestride his narrow world, crude in emotion, limited in perception, he should never have come to this wracked place. He arrives—the year is 1887—at the invitation of the parish priest, in the capacity of school-master; but before long he makes it apparent that they who talk of Nara are to say that it encompasses but one man. In this error of judgement lies his tragedy. The almost overwhelming misfortunes that descend upon him are not brought on by any real depravity. As a teacher he is harsh, as a husband he is blind; but his early devotion to the priest (his later enemy), his pathetic attempts to love his dull wife, and above all his piteous worship of the little son who is killed by a falling rock, these indicate his latent tenderness.

This part of his nature becomes effaced as much through the bitterness that follows the death of his son—the only misfortune, by the way, not brought on even indirectly by Skerrett himself—as through the relentlessness of the ill fate that seems to pursue him. Each stroke of fate falls with the intensity of a bolt of thunder, and each is preceded by some act of Skerrett's in its effect as disastrous as lightning.

O'Flaherty achieves this intensity partly through his technique of plot structure, partly through his style, partly though his conviction that good writing must come out of reality. Each incident in the narrative, although distinct from the others, is like a radius pointing towards the central development of the main character, lending a fullness to the tale even though Skerrett's growth proceeds along a straight line. The setting is sufficient to lend the atmosphere, but his style has a consistent grotesqueness and compression that are increased by his trick of repeating certain sounds. In describing, for instance, the terror of some sheep that are terrified by the approach of Skerrett, O'Flaherty writes:

> They left a tr*a*il *o*f so*d*den wo*o*l where they had passed and they were *swallow*ed in the fo*g*, while their *mournful* bleating became *more* distant until it died out and there was nothing left but the d*a*rk fo*g* and the sea.

The letters in italics have a very woeful sound. In another passage, the repetition of the *b*'s and the *l*'s create a blubbering effect quite appropriate to its context:

> The fear of hunger becomes an evil demon, whose horns are emblazoned on the bright face of the sun as well as on the drooping bellies of the thunder clouds, that belch a blight upon the meagre soil, washing from the half-clad rocks the budding seeds and throwing a barricade of mountainous waves over the sea's rich treasure.

Realism is the chief approach throughout. The plight of the peasantry is not pastelled by any sentimental admiration of the simple

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life. Their struggles and their superstitions are reproduced with all the grimness of Synge in his *Riders to the Sea*, if not with the latter's sympathy. O'Flaherty does not balk at the physical; to almost as great an extent as in his compact stories, especially *The Doctor's Visit* or *The Three Lambs*, in *Spring Sowing*, he does not shy away from the unashamedness of the physiological.

So much for style. But because of the unrelieved grimness of his life Skerrett—who is a pitiable if not a delectable character—is not quite convincing. Even on the island of Nara the mist does not always becloud. The novel, however, must not be measured by the yardstick of probability alone. The quality of its prose and the merits of its construction warrant its ranking among the best written works of the day.

VIVIAN O. WEINER

THE MARRIAGE OF SIMON HARPER *by Neil Bell* (PUTNAM. $2.50)

ENGLAND is sponsoring a revival of the long, long novel under the powerful leadership of Messrs. Priestley, Herbert, and Cronin. Mr. Bell, a newcomer to auctorial ranks, rallied at once to their banners. In this, his third novel, he has written 250,000 words about a carpenter and his wife. Beginning from scratch, Simon and Bessie rear a large family and a large fortune. One by one, the children fall away from the fold. The eldest son drifts to Australia. Twins, the fruit of Bessie's adultery, are killed in the War. One daughter also goes to Australia, while another is killed in an automobile accident after a career in London's redlight district. Even the news of her eldest son's fortune fails to reconcile Bessie to these tragedies. She commits suicide, and Simon, finding her body, rises to the situation by a simple act of faith.

Mr. Bell has definite qualifications for his profession. He is sincere and conscientious, and he is a good, though not a distinguished, craftsman. He obviously understands the humbler strata of life, and it is equally apparent that his understanding is shot through and through with sympathy. The ensemble, however, does not convince. *The Marriage of Simon Harper* is a saga without a point —it lacks, for example, the saliency of detail and the shrewd eclecticism which make the volumes of Mr. Galsworthy tolerable. It may be a study in futility, in nemesis, or in social history, pure and simple. It may, indeed, be what any reader wants it to be, and, for that reason, it is essentially trivial. This failure has nothing to do with reality —the characters are themselves convincing enough, though Mr. Bell becomes less sure of himself as he ascends the social ladder, falling back on caricature when he is baffled. The book lacks implications, and it has no contour. The characters move in a straight line, due to the author's rather naïve feeling for time. All these flaws indicate that Mr. Bell is merely a promising apprentice.

WALLACE BROCKWAY

SUMMER IS ENDED *by John Herrmann* (COVICI-FRIEDE. $2.00)

"CHARLOTTE DALE had felt from her high school days that what she wanted most in life was a home and children, quite a few children, and for their father Carl Yoeman. There was never a time in her life before she married him that she wanted any other man to be father of her children."

This being loved for his potential offspring repulsed Carl as much as did Charlotte's poor complexion. Her mental superiority both attracted and repelled him. So he avoided her.

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But Charlotte's complexion improved, she became decidedly attractive, she had some standing as a newspaper woman while Carl was still studying journalism in college, and she quietly but unswervingly pursued him. He fell in love with her. Had he been warm blooded he could have possessed her. But he contented himself with caresses and went back to finish his senior year before marrying. Then, the weight of Charlotte's love oppressing him without her physical presence to hold him, he announced his engagement to somebody else.

When Charlotte heard of this she got drunk and slept with a man who disliked Carl. She became pregnant and had an abortion. She was miserable until she learned that Carl had broken his engagement and was a journalist in Paris. She followed him there, found him and found that he still loved her. They planned to marry. But when she thought she was pregnant by him and consulted a physician, she was told that as a result of her abortion she would probably be sterile for life.

The protagonist of *Summer Is Ended* (the significance of this title is not quite clear to me) is the perfect embodiment of Nietzsche's observation that woman only loves man as a means to the end of having children; and John Herrmann, in the spirit of that observation, makes an impartial and prosaic report of Charlotte's pursuit of Carl, of her hopes, stratagems, defeats, and victories, and of Carl's reactions. In the wording of this report he excludes all but the bluntest, least pretentious expressions: the style of the whole book is like that of the opening paragraph. A nice day is simply a nice day and the moon (which is not allowed to appear) is the moon and nothing else. The book is glaringly innocent of anything approaching fine writing.

That the author achieves reality in spite of this highly selective and artificial style is due to the soundness of his theme and his understanding of the motivating forces of his characters, even more than to the essentially American world in which they move. Yet, short and direct as this novel is, it seems too long.

When the individual sentence is dull and when the sum of sense conveyed is in rigid narrative and is not reflective—that is, running in strict chronological continuity without retroacting upon past fact to swell its significance—such a technique is most effective in a short or very dramatic work. To me *The Big Short Trip*, the short story by the author of *Summer Is Ended* which divided the honours of *Scribner's* Short Story Contest with Thomas Wolfe's story, was more absorbing and more poignant.

Ernest Hemingway, H. L. Mencken, Havelock Ellis, and Sherwood Anderson, among other eminent men of letters, have highly praised John Herrmann's previous work. Despite my inability to add an enthusiastic reaction in this instance, it still seems to me to augur well for the future of American literature that so serious and so experimental a novel is brought before the public.

JOHN BRONSON

JOSEPHUS *by Lion Feuchtwanger* (VIKING. $2.50)

SOLOMON'S temple is thought to have stood for a thousand years. The second temple at Jerusalem stood for about six hundred. Then factional disorders broke out in the city and Vespasian sent Titus with several legions to subdue them. In the struggle that followed the city was levelled to the ground and the temple was pillaged and burned. The cultural implications of that tragedy are

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apparent to all who are even vaguely aware of the great tradition of Judaism; and Josephus, being an eye-witness and participant in these events and intimately acquainted with every detail of Jewish history, told the story in his chronicle with an unparalleled majesty.

Josephus himself, however, was not a majestic figure. An opportunist and a trimmer, with a very natural wish to save his own skin, his most sincere feeling was devotion to the privileged class into which he had chanced to be born. In short, he was, if not a despicable, at least a common and not very interesting type. Feuchtwanger, desiring to use him as the hero of a rather extended historical novel, has been tempted to try to add several cubits to Josephus's moral stature and to place what seems undue stress on his public influence. No doubt a squirrel can set off an avalanche if conditions are otherwise right. But the squirrel is still a squirrel and philosophers are bound to reflect that if it had not been one squirrel it might well have been another. Meanwhile the avalanche itself has a grandeur more important than the trivial immediate circumstance; and the final corruption and decay of the holy city of the Jews has such an heroic quality that one does not willingly divert one's attention from it to consider shabby intrigues at the court of Nero or courtships in Alexandria.

If writers of historical novels must go in for human interest, why cannot they discern what is humanly interesting and not try to persuade us that the process of inevitable ripening and decay which is the essence of history can be advanced or retarded because a voluptuous princess refuses or yields her favours to a conquering general? Feuchtwanger admits in the end that such things do not greatly matter. But meanwhile how much effort has been lavished on the cheapest kind of suspense and how much attention diverted from the tumult of passions and jealousies that shook the foundations of the Temple in the period of its decline! If history must borrow charms from the art of fiction, why not the true graces instead of the cheap blandishments? Fortunately Feuchtwanger has chosen a story so strong that not even his faulty taste can destroy its effect.

ROBERTS TAPLEY

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THE BOOKMAN'S GUIDE TO FICTION

General

FAMILY HISTORY *by V. Sackville-West* (Doubleday, Doran)*
A moving story of the relation between two incompatible lovers, one of the most entertaining of the season. Reviewed on page 734.

NOBODY STARVES *by Catharine Brody* (Longmans, Green)*
A story of much promise, which no one need avoid because it has unfortunately been announced as America's first proletarian novel. Reviewed on page 731.

THE SALUTATION *by Sylvia Townsend Warner* (Viking)*
A group of fifteen excellent stories by the woman who is writing probably the most distinguished English in fiction today. Reviewed on page 732.

A LONG TIME AGO *by Margaret Kennedy* (Doubleday, Doran)
Another of Miss Kennedy's grand family-stories, getting all that is to be got out of every situation. Reviewed on page 732.

THE NARROW CORNER *by Somerset Maugham* (Doubleday, Doran)*
Another very good exotic novel by the author of *The Moon and Sixpence*. Reviewed on page 735.

SAVE ME THE WALTZ *by Zelda Fitzgerald* (Scribner's)
An earnest, honest little story of a girl trying desperately to make a character for herself that will carry her through life. By the wife of Scott Fitzgerald. Reviewed on page 735.

BLACK MISCHIEF *by Evelyn Waugh* (Farrar & Rinehart)*
Bright extravaganza of a mythical African Emperor and his Minister of Modernization. Reviewed on page 733.

THE MARRIAGE OF SIMON HARPER *by Neil Bell* (Putnam)*
Two-hundred-and-fifty-thousand words about a carpenter and his wife, from the hand of a promising apprentice. Reviewed on page 742.

INCHIN' ALONG *by Welbourn Kelley* (Morrow)*
Excellent characters in a propaganda novel about a patient Negro. Reviewed on page 738.

SKERRETT *by Liam O'Flaherty* (Long & Smith)*
Well-written story of relentless fate in the Irish island of Nara. Reviewed on page 741.

* All prices $2.00 except when followed by asterisk, in which case the price is $2.50.

SUMMER IS ENDED *by John Herrmann* (Covici, Friede)
The tragedy of a woman who wanted children, and knew whom she wanted for their father. Reviewed on page 742.

THE INFINITE LONGING *by Marie Verhoeven Schmitz* (Harcourt, Brace)
The spiritual metamorphosis of a Dutch financier. Reviewed on page 740.

EAST OF EDEN *by Isa Glenn* (Doubleday, Doran)*
Story of a beautiful woman genius who marries into a socially impeccable family and dies of her inability to compromise. New York literati will enjoy identifying each other in Mrs. Glenn's cast of characters.

PUBLIC AFFAIRES *by Barbara Worsley-Gough* (Dial)
One of those novels in which all the husbands, wives, lovers, and mistresses have paired off with new partners at the end. Very witty, but parents of young girls should be warned that it hasn't a moral.

BALLET FOR THREE MASKS *by James Cleugh* (Dial)*
Ambitious and over-mannered story of the eternal triangle; but the influence of the three main characters on each other is well worked out, and life among the artists gets a better presentation than usual.

MARCELA *by Mariano Azuela* (Farrar & Rinehart)
A class-conscious novel whose one excellence is its vivid picture of the Mexican scene and the sense it conveys of Mexican life. There is plenty of violence, plain and fancy, a good portrait of a wanton, a pathetic story of a chaste love.

PENINSULA PLACE *by Denis Mackail* (Doubleday, Doran)
A week in the pleasant life of Ian and Felicity, who have left Greenery Street for a more commodious house. Exquisite and touching, a deeply understanding story of marriage.

FIRST NIGHT *by Lorna Rea* (Harpers)*
A *tour de force* analyzing a first night from the point of view of the producer, the audience, the actors, but especially the playwright, who will be accepted by the girl he loves if his play is successful. A keener interest in technique than in character results in competent writing but not much conviction.

TREEHAVEN *by Kathleen Norris* (Doubleday, Doran)
Treehaven shelters a Californian family of four lovely girls from all but one problem: how to find husbands. Eventually each finds her happy answer —only first Cynthia reaches the wrong solution, and the correctness of Gray's isn't recognized.

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FROM FLUSHING TO CALVARY *by Edward Dahlberg* (Harcourt, Brace)*
Street scenes for strong stomachs that relish shoddy minutiae about greasy-faced Lizzie.

A YOUNG MAN OF FIFTY *by Rose Feld* (Dutton)*
In his wife's judgement, the incredible gentleman of the title indulges his taste for Chivalry just once too often, and they separate. When his fifth effort as protector of Woman collapses he telephones his wife, who may or may not invite him to return.

HERE ARE MY CHILDREN *by Mona Goodwyn Williams* (Mohawk)
This book's main concern is Christine who, as one of the children to break the family circle, takes a job in New York, then a lover, and finally a husband. In her second novel the author may choose a single theme (instead of four), think it all out beforehand, and give better play to her real capacity for making sound observations on human behaviour.

BRIEF SEDUCTION OF EVA *by Mathilde Eiker* (Doubleday, Doran)
An amusing version of what happens when a man courts his business instead of his beautiful young wife.

A-HUNTING WE WILL GO *by Geoffrey Brooke* (Lippincott. $3.00)
A young couple take up, with much humour, the serious business of buying hunters, country houses, and correct riding clothes in order to become hunting people. It is all ideal for that particular brand of Anglophile which thrills at the mention of clotted cream in Devon, kippers at breakfast, and English landscapes filled with horses, hounds, a fox, and well-tailored red coats.

THE MAN WHO SEARCHED FOR LOVE *by Pitigrilli* (McBride)
Frivolous tale (translated) of a French judge in search of truth, who resigns and later becomes a highly successful circus clown. Lightly cynical, with a continuous round of idea-play.

Provincial America

LIGHT IN AUGUST *by William Faulkner* (Smith & Haas)*
Latest horror story by the Eugène Sue of the New South. Reviewed on page 736.

TO MAKE MY BREAD *by Grace Lumpkin* (Macaulay)
A Southern hill family is forced to go down to town to make their living in the mill. An honest, well-told book, and a clear statement of an important problem. Reviewed on page 739.

MOUNTAIN BORN *by Emmett H. Gowen* (Bobbs-Merrill)
This is a regulation mountain story, happily supplemented by a few mountain songs and customs, and the use of the Tennessee mountain speech. There is beauty in the realness of this language and in the unselfconscious manner in which Mr. Gowen uses it.

TOWARD ROMANCE *by Rollo Walter Brown* (Coward-McCann)*
The second part of a trilogy, *Emergence*, dealing with the adjustment of an agricultural people to a newly-introduced industry, coal mining. The story (autobiographical, one judges) of a childhood among the hills is set forth with meticulous and often dull care.

Historical

JOSEPHUS *by Lion Feuchtwanger* (Viking)*
A human-interest novel of the Jewish historian, who is made the hero of a great epoch. Reviewed on page 743.

PETER ASHLEY *by DuBose Heyward* (Farrar & Rinehart)*
The Charleston of 1861 in an historical novel. Reviewed on page 738.

A YANKEE ROVER *by Christopher Ward* (Simon & Schuster)*
Continuing the adventures of Jonathan Drew in the 1820's, wherein he consorts with gamblers, buffalo herds, and high society, steals two slaves, undergoes fire and shipwreck, strikes the Santa Fé trail, makes a lot of money, and is saved from starvation by Indians. A galloping tale by a knowledgeable writer, expert in tilting coincidence to get the last drop of satisfaction.

BEYOND THE BLUE SIERRA *by Honoré Morrow* (Morrow)*
Historical research, partly in diaries of the period, and a fine feeling for the southwest have gone into Mrs. Morrow's story of the expedition in 1775 from Mexico to find a new overland trade route to the California missions and to found a settlement at the Port of San Francisco. The presence of too many romantic themes precludes a product of scholarship in the form of a novel, like *Death Comes to the Archbishop*; the story is at best a dashing but honest glimpse into southwestern exploration, the dream of a New Spain, and Spanish colonial life.

IDLERS' GATE *by John Winch* (Morrow)
In eighteenth-century Marienburg malignant rumour and ambitious conspiracy almost prevent a youthful, attractive, and virtuous Regent from carrying forward the guardianship of his royal nephew. All is serene when, at the climax, "a child's breath blew away much foul murk".

Detective and Mystery

THE EGYPTIAN CROSS MYSTERY *by Ellery Queen* (Stokes)
Rather more blood than you're accustomed to from this fellow. A lot of people think S. S. Van Dine (Willard Huntington Wright) has committed the Ellery Queen as well as the Barnaby Ross ("Drury Lane") books. In this one occur four crucifixions with trimmings. Catching the crucifier in a cheap Chicago hotel is a bit anticlimactic. Interesting sidestuff comes from a nutty Egyptologist, nudism on Oyster Island, an ancient Duesenberg affectionately called "Duesie" by Mr. Queen, and a bearded professor named Yardley whose smeller is sweller.

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THE RESURRECTION MURDER CASE *by Stanley Hart Page* (Knopf)

Second appearance of Christopher Hand, able sleuth, sculptor, and forger in a nice way. There's a corpse in the library, another in the cellar, a skeleton in the woods. Every picture in the house covers a hole in the wall. Hand, as sculptor-resurrector, frightens the murderer to death and recovers the jewels. All this over in New Jersey.

MONEY MUSK *by Ben Ames Williams* (Dutton)

No. 1 problem: Where's Mr. Peace and that $400,000 trust fund for Clint and Clara Jervis, fine young people who think reversed fortunes fun? No. 2: Who shot Dr. Canter, a cad, in Actress Lola Cyr's dressing room? Inspector Tope detects. A good, clean rouser, fit also for your Aunt Hattie.

RED DEATH *by Gilbert Collins* (Holt)

Theatrical goings-on in China. Secret society, knife-throwing, kidnapped heroine, deserted monastery, sweet-smelling mystery girl, some murdering. In the *Fu Manchu* school, toward the tail of the class.

THE RED CASTLE MYSTERY *by H. C. Bailey* (Doubleday, Doran)

Mr. Joshua Clunk, criminal lawyer, learns of a client's death and promptly proceeds to investigate on his own. Scotland Yard in the person of Superintendent Bell fumbles about in Mr. Clunk's wake, but it is the wily lawyer who uncovers the link between his client and the abduction of young Lord Luel. More than an engaging mystery, it is a story of distinct merit.

THE CRIME OF INSPECTOR MAIGRET *by Georges Simenon* (Covici-Friede. $1.50)

In Brussels the worthy Inspector, seeking to kill a few hours till train time, starts in pursuit of a shabby man with a shabby suitcase. A suicide follows in Bremen and the story of a murder perpetrated ten years before in Liége reveals a unique blackmailing scheme.

THE STUDENT FRATERNITY MURDER *by Milton Propper* (Bobbs-Merrill)

An unexpected death during the fraternity initiation rites at the University of Pennsylvania chapter of Mu Beta Sigma gives Tommy Rankin, Philadelphia's keenest detective, a hard problem to solve. Although grievously misled during his investigation he gets his man in the nick of time.

THE OSTREKOFF JEWELS *by E. Phillips Oppenheim* (Little, Brown)

An attaché of the American Embassy leaves Russia, during the early days of the Revolution, with jewels of fabulous value. Pursued by friend and foe alike he crosses frontiers and finally reaches England in a spectacular flight in time to make good his promise. A thrilling adventure story quite up to the usual Oppenheim standard.

MINUTE MYSTERIES *by H. A. Ripley* (Houghton Mifflin. $1.00)

A minute to read and a minute to guess. The newest party game devised to test the reasoning ability of the reader. Seventy problems to solve, with the answers given in the back of the book.

FULLER'S EARTH *by Carolyn Wells* (Lippincott)

After months of police investigation Fleming Stone unearths a single clue that leads him to the killer of wealthy Duncan Searle. At the conclusion of this puzzling case Stone is spared the unpleasant duty of making public the murderer's name by a second death.

THE CORPSE ON THE WHITE HOUSE LAWN *by Diplomat* (Covici-Friede)

Dennis Tyler, the irresistible chief of the Political Intelligence Bureau, again plays the lead in tracking a criminal who leaves a corpse on the lawn of the Executive Mansion. The alert and energetic young man succeeds where the police fail.

DR. THORNDYKE'S SECRET *by R. Austin Freeman* (Dodd, Mead)

A mystery in three parts apparently unrelated but linked together by the genial medico-sleuth. Modern science applied to the detection of crime reveals the sinister motive behind Inspector Badger's murder. Dr. Freeman projects into his ingenious tales a remarkable understanding of the criminal mind.

BEST AMERICAN MYSTERY STORIES *selected by Carolyn Wells* (Boni. $1.00)

Twenty short stories dealing with thievery, murder, and mystery by twenty American authors.

SIX DEAD MEN *by André Steeman* (Farrar & Rinehart)

A French mystery story in which six friends who have made a pact to share their fortunes meet with death. Ably translated by Rosemary Benét.

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POETRY OF THE NEW SEASON

A TALE OF TROY *by John Masefield* (MACMILLAN. $1.50)

IT IS somewhat churlish to condemn this poem for fulfilling its author's intentions. John Masefield has long been an apostle of elocution: and this tale was written so that seven "beautiful Speakers" might recite it on Midsummer's Night, 1932. With reference to beautiful speaking the poem is successful: it is only with reference to Troy that it is inappropriate. As it happened, five of the speakers were female and two male, and the story had to be improvised to suit this uneven distribution of the sexes. This is where the critic in us raises his lament. Troy, we say, is not an easy subject; it demands a careful and devoted treatment; and a poem which adds nothing to its story but an intermittent dignity of language is already condemned as an unimportant poem.

The Tale has scarcely begun when Klutaimnestra "enters" to tell us about Aulis; then a Spearman hurries through a matter of ten years' fighting; then the "child of Epeios" and the two daughters of King Sthenelus take up the tale of the Horse which is interrupted by Kassandra and concluded by the Spearman. This succession of rhetorical *personae* merely serves to weaken whatever structure the tale might have had. Bandied from mouth to mouth, the narrative has every appearance of hesitation; it would not be unkind to say that it stutters. And why not, indeed? For whatever volume and richness those "beautiful Speakers" may have given it cannot be transferred to cold print: and what may well have been spoken like a drama reads like a series of declamations.

Nor is this the only fault. In the early Christian world the story of Troy appeared in many habits; it was variously dull, barbarous, and quaint, but nobody quite succeeded in making it romantic. Today the attempt is even less successful. This is from Masefield's opening movement, *The Taking Of Helen*:—

Paris came from a Trojan glen,
The prince of the world's young famous men,
With a panther's eye and a peacock air,
Even the goddesses wooed him then.

He came from Troy to the Spartan port,
He moored his galley: he rode to court
In a scarlet mantle spangled with gold
On a delicate stallion stepping short.

These impoverished airs present not an heroic but a mildly chivalric picture—as though the poet were seeking, in the romantic license of a mediaeval dream, to excuse some poverty of invention and meagreness of impulse. And worse is to follow. This is Paris's invitation to Helen:

O beautiful girl I love but you,
And a life of love is your only due:
Come with me over the sea to Troy,
Where Queens shall ride in your retinue.

Gone are the tall ships and the great oars: this bouncing measure suggests that he is going to take her over the sea in a row-boat.

Masefield's inappropriate beginning seems to have dictated not the form but the mood of all that follows. The descriptive passages

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do all the work: the narrative passages, where they are not mild to the point of insignificance, merely contrive to be bizarre. One example will serve. The five heroes have left the Horse and are about to open the gates of Troy to an expectant army.

One half the narrow brazen door moved back,
Showing a dark gash that grew wider and lighter;

A lamp wavered and flickered in a lane,
The damp glistened on wallwork;

This is spare and visual; but mark the sequel:

a man peered
Round the half-opened door; and "Sst, Sst, Sst!"
He hissed. It was Odysseus, from the horse.

Some violence has been done. The rustlers, you might almost swear, have surrounded the Lazy D. ranch; Odysseus wears a ten-gallon hat; and the accents of sensational fiction cry havoc upon Troy. Between these heights and such a corresponding depth as "Our hearts thumped: the adventure had begun" the narrative wisely keeps to a safe level of competence.

The ends of elocution have been served: the poem will read well aloud. The descriptive passages are often beautifully contrived; and there is an occasional moment of tenseness and horror. The poem was well worth printing, but since it is printed we have a right to ask questions. Does it not seem, when all Troy is brought to such mild ruin on page forty-five, and everything ends upon a futile lyric, that Georgian narrative poetry might see its own end written there? For a decade and more it has tried to conceal the remoteness of its characters in the immediacy of its scenes, and, scorning the healthy magic and the vigorous dreams of an earlier romance, has yet found no practical substitute. It served us well in its time. We might leave it among the ruins of Troy, mixing its tepid blood with that of the Trojan heroes: we might assume that its obsequies were pronounced by seven "beautiful Speakers" on Midsummer Night, 1932.

GEORGE DANGERFIELD

SELECTED POEMS *by L. A. G. Strong* (KNOPF. $2.00)

THE poems in this collection display a considerable versatility—a versatility in which one detects the novelist, who, because he works with an extremely fluid material, should be gifted at once with insight and curiosity. As poet his insight will help him while his curiosity may turn to what is commonplace and insignificant: and we cannot help seeking, whether rightly or wrongly, for those points where poet and novelist agree or disagree. Having indulged ourselves thus far we can then find out whether the poet is able to stand by himself.

As for agreement, that section of the book which is called Epitaphs is the best example of it. The poems here are probably the least ambitious:—

Here lies Sam Cheale, a quiet man,
Whose whistle was his only pride,
Which same he played uncommon well.
We have no music since he died.

It is perhaps unnecessary to say that this kind of thing is a lot more difficult than it sounds. In the epitaphs, in sketches like *Zeke* and *Old Dan'l*, and in *Coroner's Jury* you will find a poetic discipline of pity, charity, and humour which is rare at any time and almost unknown today.

The disagreement is somewhat more pronounced. In *Sheepstor,* for instance, there lies a prosaic comment—legitimate in the essay, the short story, and the novel: commonplace

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and insignificant in poetry—which defeats all that sweetness of fancy and delicacy of phrase can bring against it.

The little granite church upholds
Four pinnacles like holy hands,
A missioner proclaiming God
To ancient unbelieving lands.

Long time it dared the indifferent hills
Childlike, half frightened, all alone,
Lest chink of matin bell offend
The mother of its quarried stone.

Now is it proven and at peace,
Yet may not sleep, remembering
How on this moor above it stand
Stone row and mound and pagan ring.

The irony of Christian and pagan, church and cromlech is made worn and familiar: and what should be magic becomes a sort of conjuring. There are poems where those commonplaces, which only the stewardship of prose can turn to profit, are even more obvious. There are poems which have the insignificance of bad miniature. And there are poems, like *Gull Bay*, which have reached the very edges of success, but where immediate experience has yielded to the cares of observation, and that lyric intuition which apprehends and enshrines all that is momentary seems to have been vitiated by some prosaic method of check and countercheck. In *Gull Bay* we know that the flame has burned, but are forced to get what pleasure we can from the smoke.

To test a poet by the coincidence or disagreement of the novelist in him may rightly be called a poor method: it only remains to say that such a method does not always apply. The true poet in Strong, the poet who stands by himself, resists examination and compels assent. His most subtle work has a quiet and luminous surface, and I know of nothing which could be more truthfully called the very distillation of experience. *Northern Light* best answers the purposes of quotation, and may be left to speak for itself:—

Here under Heaven ringed
With fingering pale fires
The soul unpacks to lose
Her burden of desires.

Thoughts are the clean gulls,
Flesh cool as a bone.
The mind is a wave here
And the heart a stone.

There are kinds but not degrees of perfection: this is perfect of its kind.

GEORGE DANGERFIELD

NICODEMUS *by Edwin Arlington Robinson* (MACMILLAN. $1.75)

MR. ROBINSON'S latest volume is not likely to modify his fame, or to give criticism any new ground. Only an unexpected departure from the long established features of his style and temperament could have given a fresh turn to his reputation, or a new appearance to his manner. This manner has been disastrously confirmed in recent volumes; the dry verse, the incorrigible quibbling, the melancholy epigrams, the abstract characterizations, have become more and more unremittingly marked. And the power of vivid imagery, the fusion of thought and feeling with vivid projections of the senses, once at Mr. Robinson's command, has more and more deserted him.

Some of the power of poetic imagery returns to Mr. Robinson in the collection of shorter poems which make up *Nicodemus*. It seems to me superior to *Matthias at the Door* and *The Glory of the Nightingales* both in force of reflection and characterization, and in the occasional gleams of imaginative power by which it is illumined. Yet in general it will reinforce the impression of

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Mr. Robinson's manner; the exhibits are new, but the exhibitor remains uniform.

> There is no light,
> But there's a gray place where a window was
> Before the sun went down. Was there a sun?
> There must have been one; for there was a light,
> Or sort of light—enough to make me see
> That I was here alone.

The style, the quibbling on the notion of light, the verbal meagreness, the whole tenor of these lines would be appropriate to half a hundred of Mr. Robinson's characters, from Captain Craig to Lancelot or the Man Who Died Twice. As a matter of fact, the lines are here put into the mouth of Toussaint L'Ouverture. Throughout this dramatic monologue, Mr. Robinson reminds us—it seems almost as though he needed to remind himself—that Toussaint was a black man. But although the speaker affirms this frequently, he talks in a language precisely similar in style to the language which Mr. Robinson attributes to Nicodemus and Ponce de Leon.

Mr. Robinson is rather happier in one or two poems which break away from the desiccated blank verse which has been more and more exclusively serving him as a vehicle. The address of the Prodigal Son to his ungrateful brother, in heroic couplets, is humorous and wise, and gracefully turned; it is more felicitous than the other poems on Biblical themes, such as Sisera and Gideon, perhaps because the New Testament does not provide us with the remarks of the Prodigal Son to his brother, and so supplies no model to make comparisons odious. Again in rhyming stanzas, Mr. Robinson tells us of a particularly ripened and wise old gentleman named Hector Kane, and of his especially felicitous death. This is a poem to be checked in the margin and to take pleasure in remembering.

Nicodemus contains no poem likely to rank with Mr. Robinson's most famous pieces. It contains a number of highly representative performances, characteristic in theme and treatment. Mr. Robinson is in some ways a worker in the tradition of Browning. He finds his poems among people and situations; he is interested in the spiritual aspects of his themes; he frequently finds the dramatic monologue or lyric a natural vehicle. But we do not look to him for other gifts which Browning had in abundance: immense fertility of language, immense variety, a rich life of the senses and a rich apprehension of the physical world, and the power of fitting different speech to the lips of different men.

THEODORE MORRISON

RIP TIDE *by William Rose Benét* (DUFFIELD & GREEN. $2.50)

CALLED, cagily enough, "a novel in verse", Mr. Benét's poem justifies the appeal to the larger public who with F. P. A. want verse they can understand. Furthermore, it belongs neither to the traditional far-away-and-long-ago school of narrative poetry nor, though the character of Dermot owes a good deal to this, to the more recent school of Freudian Byronism, but is successfully founded in present-day city life. It is highly praiseworthy because the poet has really assimilated his material and because he has also assimilated to it a theme which is not present-day, the timeless story of unhappy love. He has handled his medium with great skill and deceptive simplicity.

The quality of the poem may be felt most sharply, perhaps, at the opening of the second section—a masterly picture of an office above railroad yards. The reader, wherever he may be, is bewitched into the very center

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of today's America, swift, alert, exciting, mysterious, beautiful, rhythmical, intricate, a flow of power down innumerable ways punctuated by the recurrent flowering of lights at dusk. It is a vivid evocation, without any "metaphysics", serving the structural purpose of placing and characterizing Gordon as the more remote and delicate setting of the first section does Sheila. From the moment of entrance of the mature Gordon, the action proceeds rapidly and with very little retrospection to the pitiful climax. Afterward:

But stunned and human hearts that laboured late
Where one had ceased to beat, with one that cried
For death, and one (he thought) that death took never,
Heard in their ears all night, like the drums of fate,
The far-off surf, the wind that would not abate,
The roar of the sea, the heavy roll of the tide,
And thought their ears would hold that sound forever.

The poem closes as it opens with the sound of the sea, blind fate; and the equally blind, co-eternal courage of man.

Mr. Benét has done admirable things with the flexible five-stress line, fitting it to the varied moods of the story like a delicate skin, making it gentle and quiet in Sheila's part, crisp, vigorous and irregular in Gordon's, and hitting the very accent of young people's talk with chattering anapests and frequent inversions. He has also accomplished a good deal with motifs, some of them very simple and obvious, the others carefully set in association. Sheila is lying in the red light of the sunset; she is dying. The fire-motif is Dermot in relation to Sheila; it disappears from the poem with her. Footsteps, "tread of the doomed", recur. Sunshine and young love make an obvious, though not hackneyed, association. These are not used for their own sake, but unobtrusively, poetically, as an aid to compression. They are not so apparent as to seem banal nor frequent enough to make the substance knotty.

Nature is kept throughout properly subordinate to human nature, and human nature, though wilful, is shown as disciplined and kept in order. These people have a definite place in a definite society. Though the philosophy which created the society is being bitterly challenged today, still the creation definitely and powerfully exists, and Mr. Benét makes legitimate use of it. He accepts it without either cynicism or Arcadian nostalgia or painfully apparent effort. He makes of its background, the country, what millions of his fellow-countrymen have come to make it, a holiday pleasure-ground. He uses it as the basis for a story which will undeservedly be both attacked and neglected.

RUTH JANET BARBER

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AT A GLANCE

Biography

LEONARDO DA VINCI *by Clifford Bax* (APPLETON. $2.00)

MR. BAX has an interpretation of Leonardo that is all his own. Since his book is one of the "Appleton Biographies" he sketches quickly the life of his subject, and then addresses himself to Leonardo's "secret". His principal clue is the portrait of Mona Lisa, of whom he writes "that on a somewhat lower social plane she might be a rapacious landlady at the seaside. . . . Here is a merciless face, if ever there was one: a self-satisfied ego: a shrewd and competent manageress, mean rather than generous. . . . Here, in short, is the average woman . . . a born housewife and, in spite of her history, a born mother of average offspring". In other words, Leonardo, so fond of caricature, was painting a grotesque. "But [his] grotesques reveal that he was more than anti-social. I submit that he was one of the few persons who definitely detest the experience of living . . . a man who loathed life but found it inexhaustibly interesting: and this view would at least explain his coldness, his 'indifference', his apparent carelessness about good and evil, his willingness to work for any one. . . . He drew the grotesques in order to be avenged upon [life]". The roots of this theory are sexual and lead back to Freud, to whom Mr. Bax expresses his indebtedness. The biography suffers in roundness and balance, but it may be recommended as unusually imaginative and stimulating.

GOD'S GOLD *by John T. Flynn* (HARCOURT, BRACE. $3.50)

THE life of John D. Rockefeller, so far as matters of historical interest are concerned, came to a close well over a decade ago. Hence it is not inappropriate that, while his personal life is not yet finished, this biography should appear. The title, *God's Gold,* refers to Rockefeller's oft-repeated statement, "God gave me my money", from which the author infers a strong sense of the responsibility of wealth. On this theme he has drawn a complete and consistent portrait of a dominant character. The book is more than a biography, however; it is equally a history of the development of Big Business, in which Rockefeller is the moving genius. The author's painstaking research, his impartiality, his sincere desire to ascertain and set forth all the facts have resulted in not only an interesting biography but a valuable historical study.

MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT *by H. R. James* (OXFORD. $2.50)

IT WOULD be difficult to imagine a more modest or a less compelling biography than this posthumous "sketch". The life of Mary Wollstonecraft was vivid enough: she was perhaps the first champion of women's rights and the first professional woman of letters; she married Godwin, and before that she bore an illegitimate daughter who became the wife of Shelley. But H. R. James, who appears to have been an Anglo-Indian educator of moderately liberal tendencies, has deliberately toned down the colourful and controversial aspects of her life, in order to show what a good woman she was. The piety of the book's intentions is disarming, but it has little more than this and the excellence of its manufacture to recommend it.

SIR CHRISTOPHER WREN *by C. Whitaker-Wilson* (MCBRIDE. $3.00)

THIS biography of Sir Christopher Wren by a London musician is sloppily written and so patched together that even to one unversed in Wren scholarship it seems stale and third-hand. It makes embarrassing efforts toward informal

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liveliness by the injection of such remarks as "How I should like to have been there then!" And Wren, of whom it would be very difficult to make a modern hero under any circumstances, comes off even worse than might have been expected. As a youth he seems to have been the gentlemanly tinker *par excellence*, renascent in nothing but ingenuity. He invented "Divers Musical Instruments", wrote a piece on "How to Stay Long Under Water", and presented Evelyn with "a piece of white marble stained with a lively red, very deep, as beautiful as if it had been natural". He had no thought of being an architect until he saw domes in Paris and wanted England to have some too.

As a successful and terrifyingly prolific church-builder he seems, according to Mr. Whitaker-Wilson, to have been an impeccable gentleman, without passion and without humour. All of which is supposed to lead up to the author's statement on p. 253 that "Christopher Wren was the greatest genius England has ever produced at *any* time in her long history".

History

JOHN SLIDELL AND THE CONFEDERATES IN PARIS *by Beckles Willson* (MINTON, BALCH. $3.50)

MR. WILLSON is a Canadian who has lived for many years in Paris, and has long occupied himself with the writing of diplomatic biography, if one may create a *genre* to fit an author. His previous works include *America's Ambassadors to France, America's Ambassadors to England, The British Embassy in Paris,* et cetera. Most of Mr. Willson's earlier books had a certain solid, scholarly setting, abounding in fine print, foot-notes, and indices. The present volume, however, is far more popular in format, though the work seems thoroughly sound from a scholarly point of view. Unfortunately, in effecting their transformation, Mr. Willson's publishers have sloughed off the index as well as the more repellent impedimenta of scholarship, and the lack is all the more unfortunate in that it effectively buries much valuable information concerning personages of considerable if esoteric interest.

Mr. Willson has done an admirable job for the diplomatic representatives of the "lost cause". He has made us live through all their desperate efforts to obtain recognition for their government, efforts made abortive by the incredible obstinacy of the Confederate States in the matter of slavery. Jefferson Davis had only to have guaranteed the slaves their freedom, in however remote a future, for the South to have been recognized by Europe, and the Civil War brought to an early conclusion very different from that which came to pass. Mr. Willson's book is remarkable for the easy narrative style in which it is written, a style which makes it not only useful to those who like to explore the byways of history, but a source of real pleasure to almost any reader who enjoys new historical material cleverly dished up.

PIONEER DAYS IN ARIZONA *by Frank C. Lockwood* (MACMILLAN. $4.00)

ARIZONA is fortunate in having found an historian in Mr. Lockwood. He is well known for his scholarly researches in the past of the Southwest; and his present volume is what one would expect from a man of his calibre. Those who like local history with a seasoning of romance, and who do not mind wading through the sometimes tiresome detail which completeness in such cases requires, will enjoy this volume. Where Mr. Lockwood's material permits, as in the case of that monumental Jesuit, Father Eusebio Francisco Kino, he has achieved narrative of the highest distinction. If the present reviewer confesses that a few of Mr. Lockwood's chapters induced extreme tedium, he likewise admits that their material itself imposed a certain necessary dulness and that while they had to be included they may easily be skipped at sight.

THE ELEGANT WOMAN *by Gertrude Aretz* (HARCOURT, BRACE. $5.00)

THIS luxurious volume, gorgeously illustrated, applies the psychology of dress, which the author conceives as being pre-eminently if not entirely a means of seduction, from the rococo period when kings' mistresses set the fashion to the present, when the bourgeoise in her triumphal

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progress, carefully observed by the stylists, sets one of her eighteen kinds of slippers firmly upon the bar-rail or volleys around the tennis court. James Laver has made a painstaking and beautiful translation, from which, on some points of fact, he occasionally explodes into foot-notes. The book ought to be read by sociologists and other reformers, to make them groan. It might, in view of its discussion of wardrobes costing thousands of dollars thrown aside in a few weeks at a shift in the style which makes their lines all obsolete, even tempt Mr. Stuart Chase to rewrite The Tragedy of Waist.

FALL OF THE INCA EMPIRE *by Philip Ainsworth Means* (SCRIBNER'S. $4.50)

TAKING up the story of Peru where *Ancient Civilizations of the Andes* left it, Mr. Means devotes the first five chapters of his new book to a brief sketch of the coming of the Spaniards under Pizarro, their conquest of the country, and the downfall of the native government. Though the rule of the Incas was far better than that of the Spaniards which followed it, there were dissensions in the royal family which helped the conquerors. The Empire, Mr. Means believes, would have fallen apart, even if the white man had never set foot in South America. The second part of the book shifts from events to institutions, describing the Spanish governmental system, the rule of the viceroys, and the temporary grants of land, which had they been permanent, might have given rise to a feudal type of aristocracy, and improved the unhappy fate of the Indians. Mr. Means reminds his readers that though there were plenty of cruelties perpetrated by some of the Spaniards, there were always others who protested vigourously, though their protests would seem to have had but little effect.

THE AMERICAN KEEPSAKE *by Russel Crouse* (DOUBLEDAY, DORAN. $2.50)

CHOICE selections from the gift-books of the mid-nineteenth century, irreverently made and commented on by the author of *Mr. Currier and Mr. Ives, It Seems Like Yesterday*, and *Murder Won't Out*. The fads and follies of other times are a harmless necessary amusement, especially when they are not too much like our own, and even when they are like ours they throw a startlingly vivid light on the mind of the period. We might point out that advice on etiquette is still being given, and taken, very seriously; that parlour games and gossip, though not so closely allied as they were, having split off into newspaper columns and books on Contract, have not entirely disappeared; that toasts are out merely because, as Mr. Crouse says, they interfere with drinking; that the heroes of bad modern stories are just as silly as those of his own horrible examples; and finally, that though in the section on "love and marriage" the hands are the hands of Lavater and Mendel, yet the voice is the undisguisable and still lusty voice of Popular Science.

STRANGER THAN FICTION *by Lewis Browne* (MACMILLAN. $1.00)

THIS is the sixteenth edition of a book first published in 1925. Although this edition is a dollar reprint the type remains clear and the paper good. It is at the present time "the only complete one volume history of the Jews of any kind in the English language".

Topics of the Day

AMERICAN BUSINESS LEADERS *by F. W. Taussig & C. S. Joslyn* (MACMILLAN. $3.75)

THIS is a competent study of the social and economic origin of business leaders in the United States based on 8749 answers to a biographical questionnaire sent to 15,000 of our successful executives. It doesn't present any startling contribution to business economics but it verifies the beliefs and conclusions of previous students in the field.

Ten percent of our population produced seventy percent of our present-day business leaders; the manual labouring classes, about half the population, produced only ten percent of our business leaders. This substantially agrees with the studies made of the parents of those listed in *Who's Who in America*. Alfred Marshall believed that seldom could a member of the labouring classes climb more than half way

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up the business structure, and that only the son or grandson could attain the peak of business success. This survey would seem to substantiate Marshall's opinion. No light whatever is shed on the question of whether business is gradually developing the attributes of a profession. The authors conclude that success in business life is more often due to innate ability than to any advantage of inherited wealth or environment —which conclusion is probably true but perhaps a little trite.

WHAT HAPPENED IN THE MOONEY CASE *by Ernest Jerome Hopkins* (BREWER, WARREN & PUTNAM. $2.50)

MR. HOPKINS was one of the newspaper men who sixteen years ago reported the trial of Thomas Mooney and Warren K. Billings for complicity in a San Francisco dynamite outrage which ended in conviction. Mooney, who was given a death sentence that was later commuted, still lies in the California penitentiary. A strong movement for his pardon has recently come to naught. At the time of his trial Mr. Hopkins thought him guilty. The sixteen years that have intervened have brought to light many facts to the contrary: these he has collated intelligently for the impartial reader. In the beginning it was the outgrowth of strife between labour and capital, with capital coming out on top. The author finds a reason for doubt which is generally ignored in California save as something to be brushed aside. "Sixteen years of printed poison", says Mr. Hopkins, "have convinced Californians that, evidence or none, it is better to keep two radicals in prison than to remove a nation-wide stimulus to radicalism." "We got the right men on the wrong evidence" is their excuse for keeping Mooney behind the bars, plus "They may not be guilty of the bomb explosion, but they belong where they are", and further "Any Governor who pardons Mooney will be digging his own political grave."

So Mooney's cell seems to be pretty tightly sealed, even though sentiment outside of California is in his favour. The facts as exposed in this book are of more than ordinary interest and it is as good as a Sherlock Holmes tale.

HIGH-LOW WASHINGTON *by 30-32* (LIPPINCOTT. $2.50)

THIS satirical and cynical volume purports to be the work of "two writers of unique experience both in Europe and America", but they lack the courage to give their names. One is inclined to think this a device to add interest to what they have to say without revealing the unimportance of the source. The things treated as revelations are pretty well known to most newspaper readers, even though they have never been formally "exposed" until now. The chapter headings are high-falutin', such as "City of Magnificent Distances", which develops the hint that the population is mainly of African descent; "We Want a Mussolini", with accompanying proof that we have a number of them; "Airs and Graces" that are very fluttering; "Grand Old Parties" that are hardly either; "David and Goliath"—a glimpse of the smooth workings of Owen D. Young as a man higher up; and "Frenzied Finance" of the usual brand. All of which proves nothing save that he who wants will get it at the national capitol. To say that it is an honest picture of the nation's capitol would be admitting too much.

Adventure

TIGER MAN *by Julian Duguid* (CENTURY. $3.00)

HERE, as in *Green Hell*, Mr. Duguid extracts the ultimate drop of excitement from the Brazilian jungle and its unruly population. The occasion is the life story of one of his companions of the earlier book, that Sacha Siemel, the transplanted Latvian, who "killed jaguars for a living with a seven-foot spear of his own manufacture, and read Tolstoy, Gogol, and Victor Hugo in the siesta-hour". What with man-eating "piranhas" in the streams, courtly rascals, deadly snakes, and the pursuit of three-hundred-pound cats, there is not much space left for the intellectual side of Mr. Siemel. The romance of far-off places and rapidly changing scenes is utilized effectively. The quick eye, strong arm, steady nerve, et cetera are much in evidence. As a South American Tarzan, Sacha Siemel gains in reality where he fails to achieve

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the higher levels of incredibility, and the author has done well to record a life so adventurous and intrepid.

IORANA! *by Robert Gibbings* (HOUGHTON MIFFLIN. $2.50)

MR. GIBBINGS is the woodcut artist whose "black-and-white" style is familiar to those acquainted with the English private presses, and *Iorana!* (Tahitian for "Hail!") is the journal of his stay on those islands made famous by Stevenson, Gaugin, and Robert Keable. The South Seas he does not find quite so romantic as the French stock-broker who preceded him there, for in the last twenty-nine years white traders and missionaries have progressed in their work of giving the natives clothes, old petrol cans, religion, and civilized diseases. But romance he finds in some measure: there are the eccentric white men, for some reason always more interesting than the natives, the native dances and parties, and the exoticism of tropical surroundings. And, of course, there is the dusky belle—in this case Pua, the only chaste woman on the island till Mr. Gibbings came along. In the end Pua marries a Chinese; her social position as Mr. Gibbings's mistress was naturally uncertain. It is a pleasant little book, illustrated with forty-one of the author's expert woodcuts.

Miscellaneous

AFTERNOONS IN UTOPIA *by Stephen Leacock* (DODD, MEAD. $2.00)

UTOPIAS generally, Marxian or aristocratic, are likely to explode in their creators' faces. They overstrain the flawed ideals of the times that produce them. This is especially true of the modern run, whose manufacturers lack Stephen Leacock's sane sense of humour and deserve, incidentally, his comments on their conventionality in design. Their ideas, then, are nicely susceptible to his forthright *reductio ad absurdum* method. The *Afternoons in Utopia* look before and after at the League of Nations, at doctors, colleges, and Communism. They are very funny. The style modulates from the newspaper key to the speechmaker's, the advertisement, and the popular article keys, back and forth, always with sure effect. And there is one new excellence: a serious, terrible bit on war. The publishers ought to have raised the price on this book.

THE GREAT CRITICS *edited by James Harry Smith and Edward Winfield Parks* (NORTON. $4.75)

THE *Loci Critici* of Saintsbury appeared almost three decades ago and until the present no equally complete and compact anthology of world criticism has been published. Messrs. Smith and Parks as editors have performed as good a service as Saintsbury and their book offers an even wider range of material. The field covered extends from Aristotle to Whitman and most of the selections are given in full. The book should be of the first value to all students of literary criticism.

UNDERSTANDING THE ARTS *by Helen Gardner* (HARCOURT, BRACE. $2.50)

THIS volume offers an elementary course in Art Appreciation. Architecture, landscape architecture, city planning, sculpture, painting, bas-relief, book-making, weaving, and pottery are the arts which Miss Gardner, in her unusually informative way, introduces to the layman. All styles and all periods, including the "ultramodern", are touched upon. The pervading aesthetics appears to be a commonsense functionalism. The approach to the different arts discussed is pedagogical and perhaps ultimately Philistine, but at the same time eager, enthusiastic, and exceptionally well-informed. Considering its comprehensiveness and its many illustrations, the book is very reasonably priced.

CARLYLE *by Louis Cazamian* (MACMILLAN. $2.75)

NINETEEN years have passed since this work first appeared in France. Throughout that period it has been recognized as the most authoritative Continental treatment of Carlyle. The present volume provides us with the first English translation.

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THE ART OF FEELING *by Horace G. Wyatt* (HOUGHTON MIFFLIN. $2.50)

THIS book aims to present in simple language the relation of emotion to human thought and life. As a brief tract on psychology, it is written along the lines of what the French call vulgarization, namely, the rendition of scientific lore in a manner which will appeal to readers who are of an inquiring spirit and of a simple heart. It touches upon the practical issues of everyday life such as the need for controlling our emotions, for understanding our fellows, for building our character through emotional restraint. The psychological basis of ethics is examined briefly in a discussion of what the author calls the ought-feeling. The philosophy of hedonism is discussed in several chapters on feeling and happiness. The book, therefore, will please those for whom it is designed, the simple and earnest folk who, in the author's words, still abide by simplicity and common sense and who preserve their faith in ideals.

THE NEW POETRY *edited by Harriet Monroe* (MACMILLAN. $3.00)

THE second and latest revision of the Monroe-Henderson collection of the "new poets", designed to gather in the names which have appeared since 1923 and the recent work of the old timers. Some omissions seem strange, in view of some even stranger inclusions, but lavish hospitality has its uses, and the book remains a valuable part of the documentation of its period. It can safely be recommended to women's clubs who wish to give a little time to modern poetry.

THE ANTHOLOGY OF ENGLISH PROSE *edited by Herbert Read and Bonamy Dobrée* (VIKING. $3.00)

THE editors of this anthology propose "to take the various purposes for which prose is written, and to see if any principle of writing will emerge". The selections are massed under three heads—"narrative", "scientific", and "emotive" —but the veriest freshman will recognize the last two as simply new and hardly more practical terms for the "expository" and the "descriptive". Although the editors have labelled bad prose as "something immoral" and seem definitely committed to uplift, we find no didactic virtues in their method. Considered as a simple compendium of excellent prose selections, however, the book can be recommended highly.

THE CATHOLIC ANTHOLOGY *by Thomas Walsh* (MACMILLAN. $2.50)

THE ideal anthology has, like the Golden Treasury, a solidity that comes from rigid selectiveness and the lustre of long use. In the first respect, Mr. Walsh's work, first published in 1927, comes close to perfection. Catholic doctrine was his standard; he took freely from writers of unquestioned orthodoxy, and from non-Catholics he chose poems inspired by the moments in which they drew near to the Church, either in some mortal crisis, as in Raleigh's *The Pilgrimage*, or in deep spiritual need, as in Henry Adams's *Prayer to the Virgin of Chartres*. So his collection is massive. That it is not, therefore, heavy and monotonous is the virtue of the spirit that informs it: Catholicism, which welcomes all sorts and conditions of men. It includes not only English and American poetry, but poem after poem translated, very often by Mr. Walsh's own hand, from the Latin and Greek internationalists of the Ages of Faith; from the Spanish, Portuguese, Catalan, Italian, and German; and even from Gaelic, Armenian, Abyssinian, Dutch, Provençal, and Polish. Mr. George Shuster of the *Commonweal*, who helped with the first edition, has added a section of newer writers.

GERMANY: A COMPANION TO GERMAN STUDIES *edited by Jethro Bithell* (DIAL PRESS. $4.00)

THE editor of this volume is a Reader in German in the University of London and the contributors are British-born specialists in German studies. Three of the chapters deal separately with specific periods in German political history, four of them treat similarly of German literature, and three chapters are given over respectively to German painting, German architecture and sculpture, and German music. An initial "survey" chapter is supplied by the editor. The work is all that its sub-title implies.

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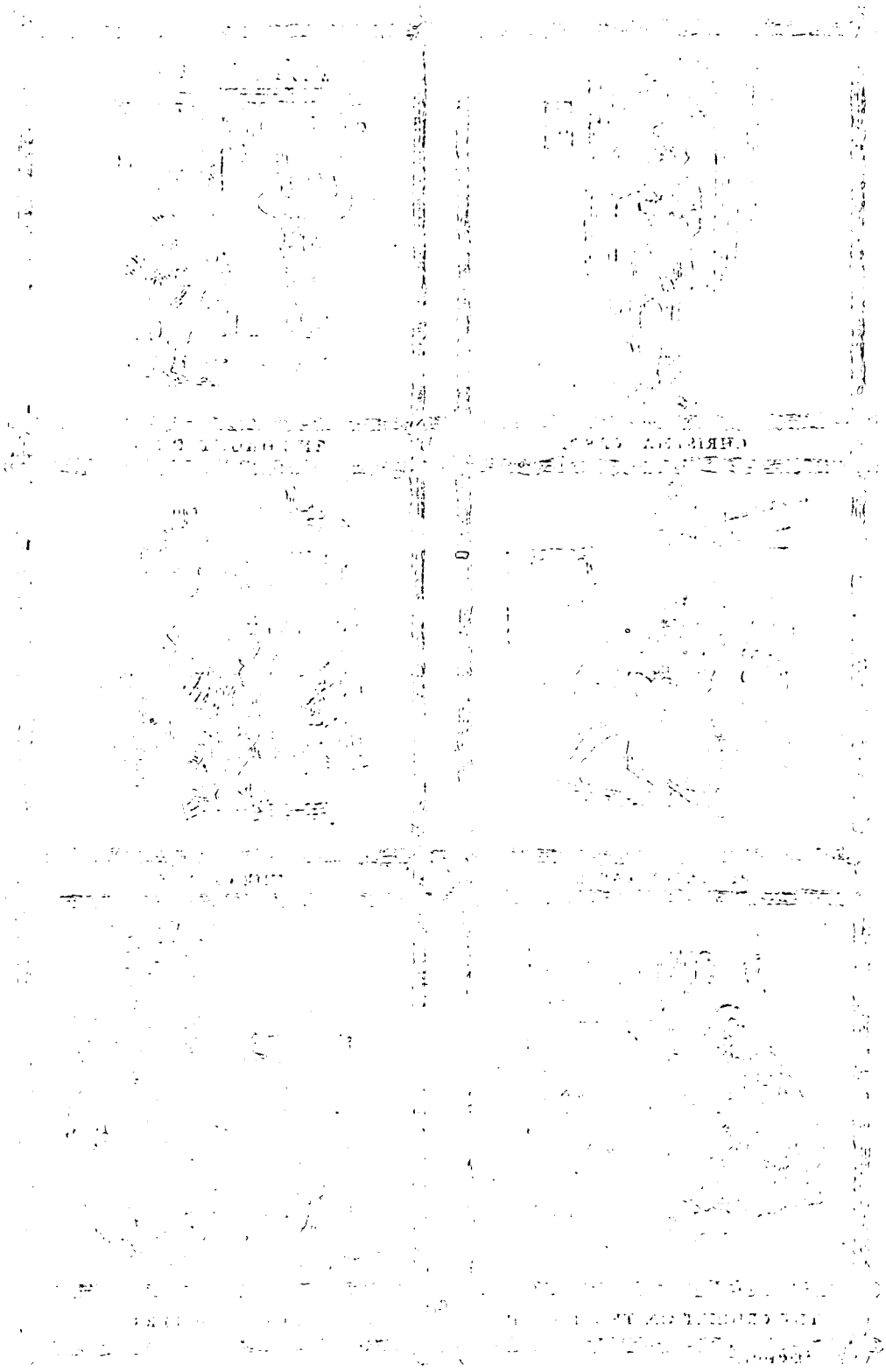

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CHRISTMAS SCENES FROM DICKENS

A woodcut specially executed for The Bookman *by Rowland C. Ellis*

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